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APRIL SPECIAL ISSUE 2015

THE AGE OF MONEY



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KIM KARDASHIAN: Jed Clampett with a BOOTY?

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ROBIN *Wright*

"WORKING *on* YOUR GRAND PLAN *is* LIKE SHOVELING SNOW THAT HASN'T FALLEN YET. JUST DO *the* NEXT RIGHT THING." –DAVID CARR

DEFROSTING *HOUSE of CARDS'* ICE QUEEN

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BETHANY McLEAN *on* MELLODY HOBSON *p.172*

SARAH ELLISON *on* THE WHITE HOUSE'S WAR *on* JOURNALISTS *p.106*

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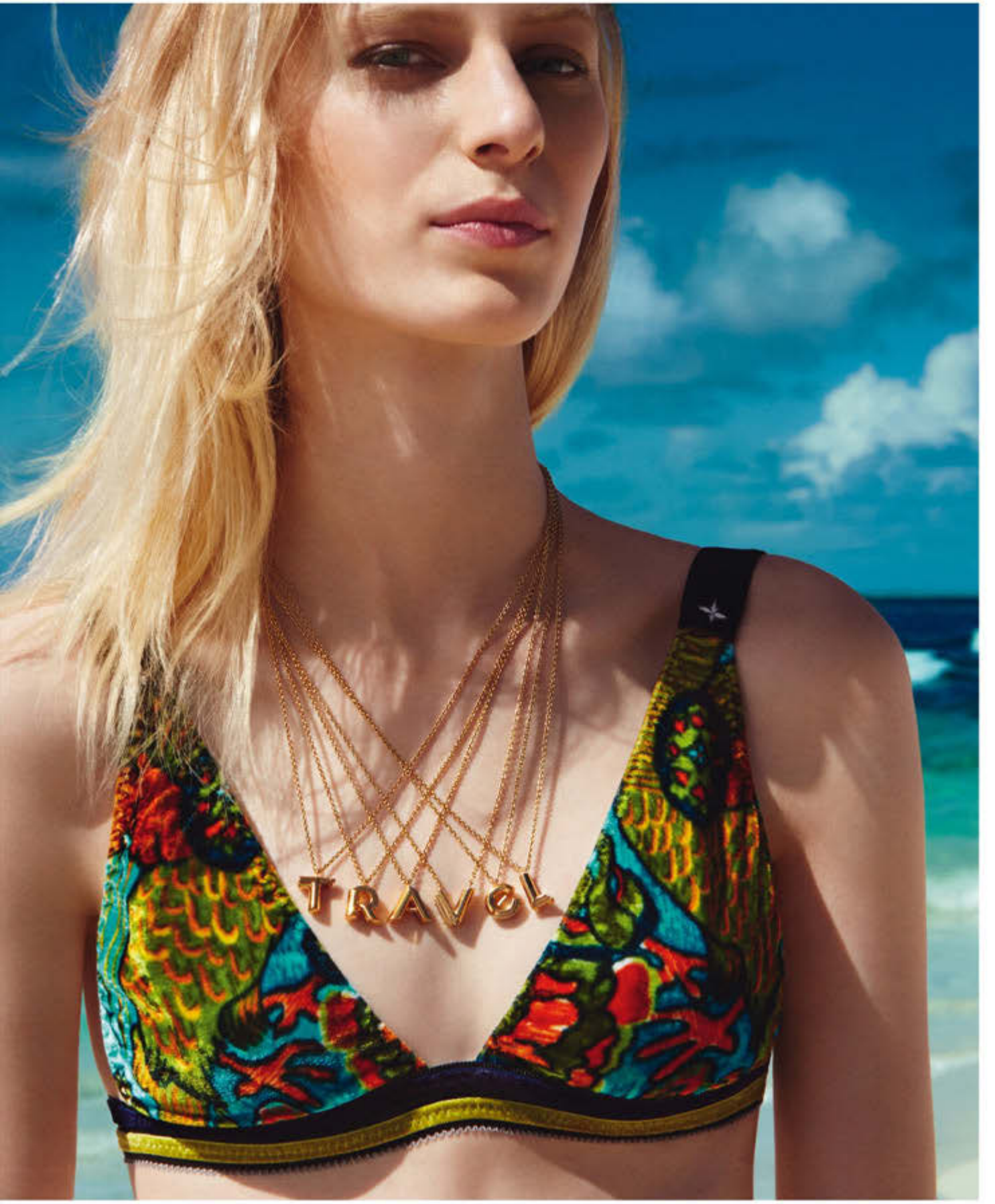
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FROM LEFT: Richard Branson (page 180); Robin Wright (page 138); Ken Lewis (page 146); Thomas Gilbert Jr. (page 156).

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FEATURES

138 **BEAUTIFUL SCHEMER** *By* SAM KASHNER
At 48, **Robin Wright** has come into her own, as one half of TV's ultimate power couple. With *House of Cards* entering Season Three, Wright opens up about her past marriage, present love, and future as a director. Photographs by Patrick Demarchelier.

144 ***V.F.* PORTRAIT: JACOB ROTHSCHILD AND DAVID ROCKEFELLER** *By* CHARLIE ROSE
After a deal that linked **two historic financial dynasties,** a noted journalist reviews the legacies of the men who forged it. Photograph by Annie Leibovitz.

146 **THE WRECKING CREW**
By WILLIAM D. COHAN The banking titans who steered Wall Street into the **2008 crisis** are living with the fallout—after reaping a massive payout. While some won't talk, others who survived the maelstrom reveal how it changed them. Photo illustration by Sean McCabe.

151 **SUDDENLY NEXT SUMMER**
Spotlight on **Britt Robertson,** who's about to lose her anonymity in *Tomorrowland,* opposite George Clooney. By Josh Duboff. Photograph by Jason Bell.

152 **RETURN OF THE KING**
Spotlight on the new Broadway staging of ***The King and I,*** with Kelli O'Hara and Ken Watanabe. By Jim Kelly. Photographs by Annie Leibovitz.

156 **A GILDED RAGE** *By* BENJAMIN WALLACE
When **Thomas Gilbert Jr.** was charged with murdering his father, hedge-fund manager Thomas Gilbert Sr., in January, New York society gasped. But those close to the 30-year-old scion had watched a tragedy in the making.

161 **LIES WITH FATHER** Spotlight on the memoir turned musical ***Fun Home,*** as it moves to Broadway. By Max Carter. Photograph by Mark Seliger.

162 **CAPITAN COURAGEOUS**
Spotlight on **Tommy Caldwell** and **Kevin Jorgeson,** the first to free-climb Yosemite's Dawn Wall. By William Langewiesche. Photograph by Jonas Fredwall Karlsson.



ON THE COVER

Robin Wright wears a gown by Valentino Sala Bianca 945 Haute Couture. Hair products by Orlando Pita. Makeup products by Kevin Aucoin. Nail enamel by Chanel. Hair by Orlando Pita. Makeup by Mark Carrasquillo. Manicure by Rieko Okusa. Set design by Mary Howard. Styled by Jessica Diehl. Photographed exclusively for *V.F.* by Patrick Demarchelier in New York City.

WRIGHT PHOTOGRAPHED BY PATRICK DEMARCHELIER; CLOTHING AND SHOES BY DIOR. BRANSON PHOTOGRAPHED BY JONAS FREDWALL KARLSSON. PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SEAN MCCABE (LEWIS). FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS

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164 **THE PRINCESS AND THE SPREE** *By* JAMES REGINATO Saudi princess **Maha bint Mohammed bin Ahmad al-Sudairi** tried to skip out on a $7 million hotel bill in Paris in 2012, and, reportedly, stiffed the city's boutiques for $20 million in 2009. How does the Saudi royal family handle its world-class shopaholic?

169 **PATRIOT GAMES** Spotlight on HBO's new comedy, ***The Brink,*** in which a dissolute secretary of state fends off global disaster. By Richard Lawson. Photograph by Jeff Lipsky.

170 ***V.F.* PORTRAIT: JOHN WHITEHEAD** *By* MICHAEL BLOOMBERG From enlisting in the navy in World War II to leading the revitalization of Lower Manhattan after 9/11, one **Wall Street legend** always answered the call of duty, until he died last month. N.Y.C.'s former mayor salutes him. Photograph by Annie Leibovitz.

172 **HOBSON'S CHOICES** *By* BETHANY McLEAN As the president of a $10 billion money-management firm, an inspiration for Sheryl Sandberg's *Lean In,* and the darling of an elite circle, including her husband, George Lucas, **Mellody Hobson** has made it to the top. To get there, she bet on herself. Photograph by Annie Leibovitz.

177 **THE WAR AT HOME** Spotlight on *V.F.*'s **Bryan Burrough,** whose new book, *Days of Rage,* chronicles the F.B.I.'s war on domestic terrorism in the 70s. By Doug Stumpf.

178 **SALZBURG, WHEN IT SIZZLES** Spotlight on **Chanel,** where Karl Lagerfeld's latest Métiers d'art collection taps into Austria's imperial past. By Ingrid Sischy. Photograph by Sebastian Faena.

180 **RISKY BUSINESS** *By* WILLIAM LANGEWIESCHE Despite a fatal test flight last fall, and the obvious risks of commercial space travel, Richard Branson's **Virgin Galactic** has more than 700 passengers booked, at up to $250,000 a ride. Here's what they should know. Photograph by Jonas Fredwall Karlsson.

VANITIES

71 **CAITLIN CALLS** Adam Leff and Richard Rushfield chart **the super-rich;** Teddy Wayne imagines **God's iPhone screen.**

FROM LEFT: Barbra Streisand (page 122); Timothy Hutton (page 198); Britt Robertson (page 151); Mellody Hobson (page 172).

ROBERTSON PHOTOGRAPHED BY JASON BELL; CLOTHING BY BOTTEGA VENETA; JEWELRY BY CARTIER. PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MELLODY HOBSON (HOBSON); BY DAVID JAMES/© TRI-STAR/PHOENIX PICTURES/THE KOBAL COLLECTION (STREISAND); ILLUSTRATION BY RISKO

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81 **30 DAYS IN THE LIFE OF THE CULTURE** **Mercedes-Benz** drives toward the future. All eyes on **Iris Apfel;** obsession-worthy items. Hot Tracks: **Timbaland.** Hot Type. My Stuff: **Cassandra Huysentruyt Grey.** Beauty bounty for spring.

COLUMNS

98 **THE SEASON OF THE RICH** *By* JAMES WOLCOTT As America's view of the rich shifts, so does prime time's. In the **new Gilded Age,** shows such as *Empire* focus on the crimes behind the fortunes. Photo illustration by Sean McCabe.

104 **GOOD-BYE TO "HELLO"** *By* A. A. GILL The **phone call** is dead. Gone the heart-to-heart marathons and the Sunday check-in with Mom. Can texting fill the void? Photo illustrations by Javier Jaén and Darrow.

106 **THE MAN WHO KEPT THE SECRET** *By* SARAH ELLISON For seven years, *New York Times* reporter **James Risen** fought the Justice Department, risking prison rather than reveal a source. Though Risen's battle is over, journalism may have lost the war. Photograph by Gasper Tringale.

114 **WALL STREET'S *FLASH* MOB** *By* MICHAEL LEWIS The author of ***Flash Boys,*** which revealed how high-frequency trading has rigged the stock market, knew his book would ruffle Wall Street feathers. It did far more than that. Photograph by Justin Bishop.

122 **A FILM OF ONE'S OWN** *By* LAURA JACOBS For all Hollywood's barriers, women from **Ida Lupino** to **Nora Ephron** have found their way into the director's chair. A portfolio of cinematic trailblazers showcases their victories.

ET CETERA

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94 **IN THE DETAILS** WILL FORTE
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FROM LEFT: Caitlin Gerard (page 71); Jack Black (page 169); Will Forte (page 94); Mark Zuckerberg (page 74).

GERARD PHOTOGRAPHED BY ARTHUR BELEBEAU; BODYSUIT BY RED VALENTINO; SHOES BY CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN. FORTE PHOTOGRAPHED BY PATRICK ECCLESINE; SUIT, SHIRT, AND TIE BY ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA; POCKET SQUARE BY BOSS; TIE BAR BY THE TIE BAR. BLACK PHOTOGRAPHED BY JEFF LIPSKY; JACKET AND SHIRT BY GUCCI. PHOTOGRAPHS FROM NINELL_ART/GETTY IMAGES (ZUCKERBERG'S FRAME); © DAVID TELLEN/CORBIS OUTLINE (ZUCKERBERG). FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS

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Behind the scenes of Robin Wright's cover shoot by Patrick Demarchelier.

ONLINE FEATURES

THE END OF THE LINE *By* JOANNA ROBINSON
A. A. Gill's column about **the death of the phone call** got us thinking: what if the most famous telephone moments from classic movies were converted to text messages? Would they still ring true?

WHEEL OF FORTUNE *By* NICOLE JONES
Using an unscientific method, *V.F.* ranks **the richest characters on TV** right now, from the music moguls on *Empire* to the landowning aristocrats on *Downton Abbey*.

ON TO THE NEXT ONE *By* JOHN LOCKETT
Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic isn't his first multi-million-dollar enterprise (remember Virgin Cola?). A brief history of his most expensive ventures.

UP IN SMOKE *By* BILL BRADLEY
Now that **marijuana legalization** is slowly expanding, and their children are off to college, the baby-boomer generation is going back to old habits.

THE CORSET AND I *By* ALEX BEGGS
See the sketches from costume designer Catherine Zuber that became the decadent wardrobe for the Broadway revival of ***The King and I.***

TOAST OF THE TOWN
Sign up for *Vanity Fair*'s **"Cocktail Hour"**—a daily digest of stories to discuss over drinks. Bonus: actual cocktail recipes every Friday.

VIDEO

THE WRIGHT STUFF *By* JEREMY ELKIN AND ZANDER TAKETOMO Go behind the scenes of *V.F.*'s cover shoot starring *House of Cards'* **Robin Wright,** photographed by Patrick Demarchelier in New York City.

IN THE DETAILS *By* PATRICK ECCLESINE
As **Will Forte** becomes *The Last Man on Earth* in his new TV series, the *S.N.L.* alum and budding sitcom star talks about his likes, dislikes, pet peeves, and the best advice he has ever gotten.

VIDEO STILLS BY ZANDER TAKETOMO (ROW 2, ROW 3, LEFT), JEREMY ELKIN (ALL OTHERS)



"I love the idea of real flair," Leight says, perched high in a Hollywood Hills home designed for Lincoln Black Label by hOmE studios. "Center Stage means being a character, having confidence, and not being afraid to be yourself and dive right in. That kind of person inspires me."



Image Maker

To Leight, "luxury is about freedom to do what you want. In design, it's about adding a twist here and there to something that might be regarded as classic, so you're creating a new kind of classic." This was exactly the kind of thinking that went into the Center Stage vehicle theme, which has its own unique twist: Foxfire Red Alcantara® accents.

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To celebrate the launch of Lincoln Black Label, we asked Leight for his take on our Center Stage vehicle theme.

Pictured here: The Center Stage Lincoln Black Label MKZ

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The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies

From Academy Award®–winning filmmaker Peter Jackson, *The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies,* is the third and final film in the trilogy and the epic conclusion to the adventure of Bilbo Baggins, who joins the wizard Gandalf, Thorin Oakenshield, and his company of dwarves, in the clash of the Battle of the Five Armies. Own the movie on Digital HD now or on Blu-ray™ March 24.

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1 Annie Leibovitz

For this month's issue, *Vanity Fair*'s Principal Photographer, Annie Leibovitz, shot Kelli O'Hara and Ken Watanabe, stars of the Broadway revival of *The King and I* (page 152). "It took three people to carry Kelli's gown, which spanned five feet," says Senior Photography Producer Kathryn MacLeod. "Once we saw her in full regalia, we realized we'd need a bigger set." Leibovitz also photographed two *V.F.* Portraits (pages 144 and 170) and financier Mellody Hobson (page 172).

2 Michael Bloomberg

In the *V.F.* Portrait on page 170, former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg—or Mike, as he's known around town—honors John Whitehead, who died in February. A former co-chairman of Goldman Sachs and deputy secretary of state under Ronald Reagan, Whitehead also headed the agency tasked with rebuilding Lower Manhattan following 9/11. "John was respected by leaders in both parties," says Bloomberg, "and he was an ideal partner for us in bringing New York City back from the brink."

3 Patrick Demarchelier

Patrick Demarchelier has photographed covers for nearly every major American magazine, from *Newsweek* to *Vogue,* and counts among his subjects the late Princess Diana and Madonna. For this month's cover and accompanying article ("Beautiful Schemer," on page 138), the longtime *V.F.* Contributing Photographer shot *House of Cards* actor Robin Wright. "Robin was fantastic," says Demarchelier. "She was very charming and interesting."

4 Michael Lewis

As he writes in "Wall Street's *Flash* Mob" (page 114), Contributing Editor Michael Lewis anticipated a certain amount of self-serving criticism when he published *Flash Boys* last year. He'd endured the same attacks from what he calls the Baseball-Industrial Complex following the release of *Moneyball,* in 2003. "With *Moneyball* the message was: If you don't do this, you're going to lose," says Lewis. "But *Flash Boys* is about not just a business transformation but also an ethical one." The paperback edition of *Flash Boys* will be published this month.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 56

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARGARET GIBBONS (3); PAUL GILMORE (1); © ERIN PATRICE O'BRIEN/CORBIS OUTLINE (2); BY TABITHA SOREN LEWIS (4)





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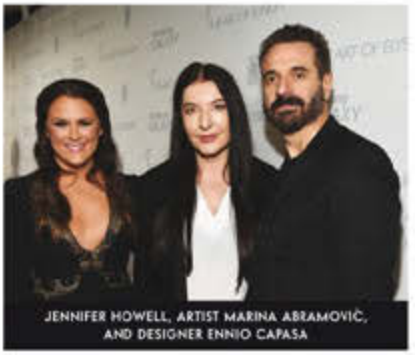
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JENNIFER HOWELL, ARTIST MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ, AND DESIGNER ENNIO CAPASA

GIVE

The Art of Elysium

The Art of Elysium was founded in Los Angeles 18 years ago by Jennifer Howell primarily as an artist's charity committed to healing the world through art. The organization recruits and supports artists by encouraging them to give back to individuals and various populations in need using their creativity and artistry. By training artists in service and connecting them with those in need, the Art of Elysium helps to provide the artistic community with an outlet to use their skills and give back. To learn more, visit **theartofelysium.org.**



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1 Sam Kashner

In "Beautiful Schemer" (page 138), Contributing Editor Sam Kashner describes how veteran talent Robin Wright came to enjoy a breakout moment as Claire Underwood in *House of Cards.* In his reporting, Kashner discovered that Wright and her treacherous character couldn't be less alike. "I thought she'd roll me up like a cigar and smoke me down to the nub," he says. "It wasn't like that at all."

2 Bethany McLean

"Though she has strategically chosen her friends, I get the impression that her friendships are very genuine," says Contributing Editor Bethany McLean of Mellody Hobson, the dynamic investor and the subject of "Hobson's Choice" (page 172). From Facebook's Sheryl Sandberg to former U.S. senator Bill Bradley, Hobson's friends were sincere in their praise. "You would expect the remarks to be superficial," says McLean, "but that wasn't the case."

3 William Langewiesche

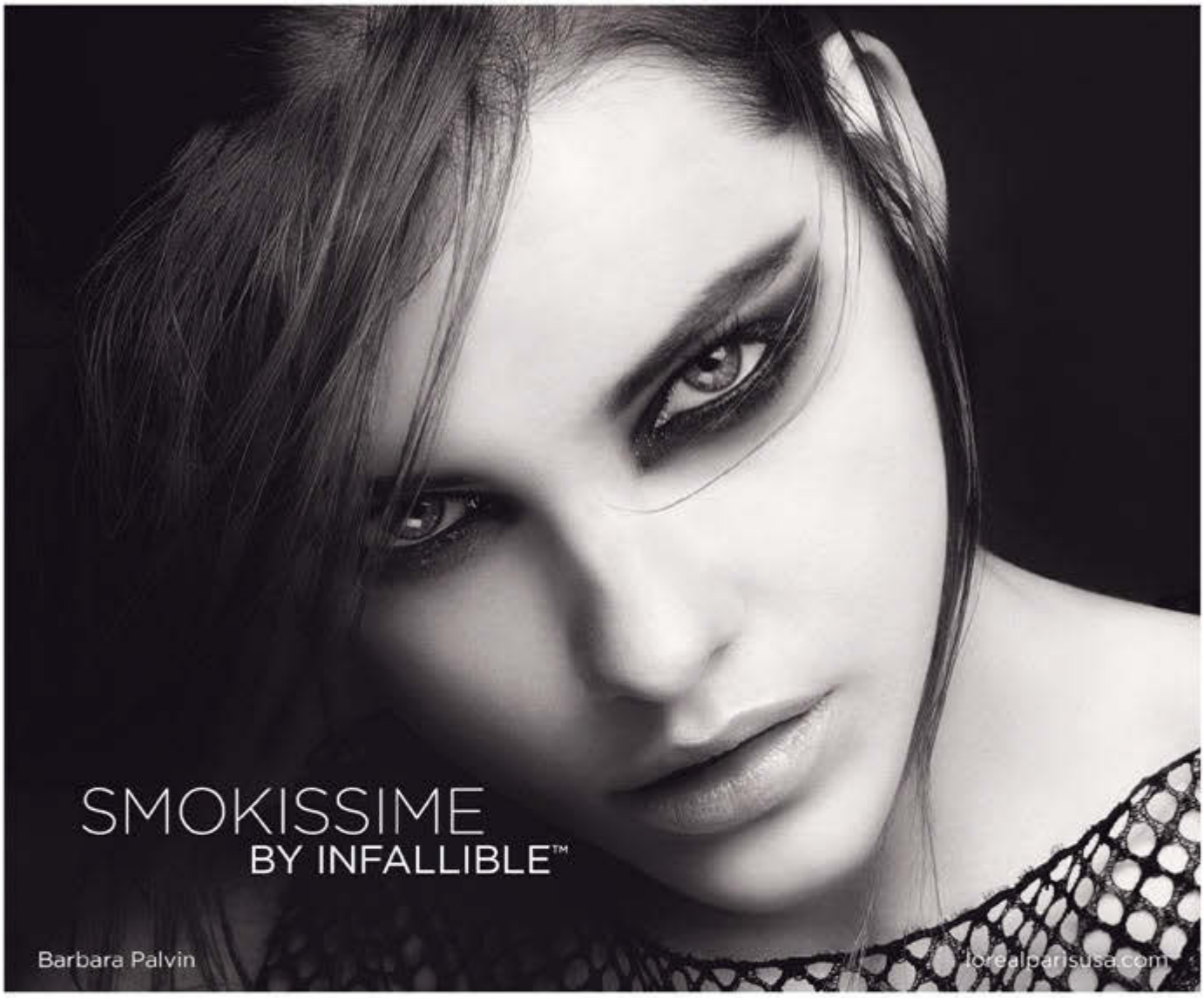
After last fall's catastrophic Virgin Galactic rocket-ship accident, International Correspondent William Langewiesche met with the project's engineers to report "Risky Business" (page 180). But despite the setback to Richard Branson's dream, "there's little doubt that the first regular commercial passenger space service will come in this form," says Langewiesche, whose Spotlight of the climbers who ascended the 3,000-foot face of Yosemite's El Capitan is on page 162.

4 Charlie Rose

As the host of his P.B.S. talk show for more than 20 years, Charlie Rose has interviewed and come to know the world's foremost figures in politics, art, and industry. Such is the case with David Rockefeller and Lord Jacob Rothschild, about whom Rose writes in the *V.F.* Portrait on page 144. "These are men of intelligence, culture, achievement—and yet they have personality and character," he says. "These are giants."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HENRY DILTZ (1), JAMIE MCCARTHY/GETTY IMAGES (4), GASPER TRINGALE (2, 3)





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VANITY FAIR

72 JAZZ AGE GEMS

From the pages of Vanity Fair

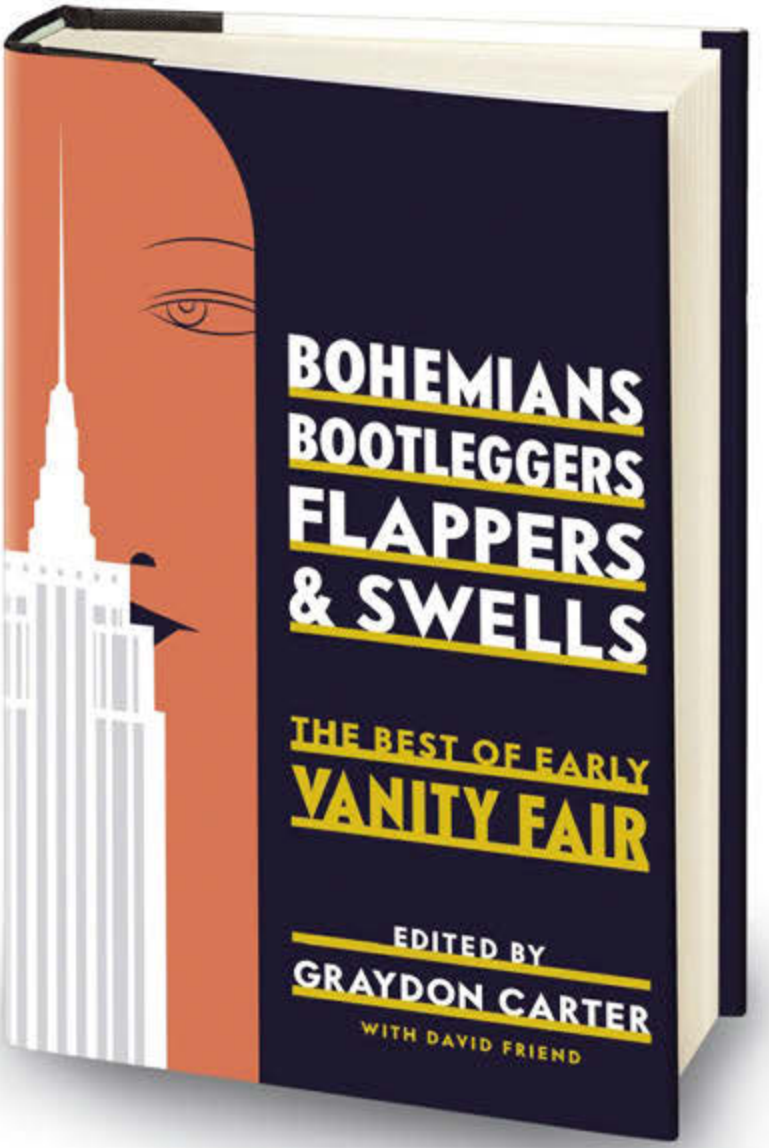
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WATCH

Season Two: *L.A. Frockstars*

Fashion trends are fleeting, but good vintage garments are forever. The Smithsonian Channel presents Season Two of the highly acclaimed docu-series *L.A. Frockstars*. The network's successful first foray into fashion and reality TV continues to reveal the daily adventures and challenges of Doris Raymond in her fast-paced, high-stress job as the owner of the famous Los Angeles boutique The Way We Wore. *L.A. Frockstars* follows Doris and her team of "vintage virtuosos" to estate sales, expo shows, and flea markets in search of rare gems, bringing vintage glamour to Hollywood's most influential stylists and costume designers. *L.A. Frockstars* premieres Thursday, March 19 (check your local listings).



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1 Katherine Goldstein

VF.com Editor Katherine Goldstein came to *Vanity Fair* last year from *Slate,* where she was director of traffic and social-media strategy. In addition to shaping and directing the 15 to 20 items the Web site publishes daily, Goldstein and a team of more than a dozen worked on the redesign of VF.com, which launched last month. "We wanted the reading experience on the Web site to match *V.F.*'s tradition of journalistic and photographic excellence," says Goldstein.

2 Benjamin Wallace

In reporting on the murder of hedge-fund manager Thomas Gilbert, allegedly by his son, that took place on Manhattan's East Side ("A Gilded Rage," on page 156), Contributing Editor Benjamin Wallace discovered the community's pervasive social veneer. "I found it challenging to report on the insular Wasp society in which this violence transpired," says Wallace, "and I wondered whether the importance of keeping up appearances stood in the way of meaningful intervention." Wallace is the author of the best-seller *The Billionaire's Vinegar.*

3 James Reginato

To report on the seemingly limitless spending of Saudi princess Maha al-Sudairi for "The Princess and the Spree" (page 164), Writer-at-Large James Reginato had to follow the trail of her expenditures in Paris, while Maha is reportedly confined to her palace in Riyadh. "So this story required a lot of old-fashioned pavement pounding," says Reginato. "At one point, lurking in the lobby of the Hotel George V, I felt a bit like Inspector Clouseau."

4 A. A. Gill

As a father, Contributing Editor A. A. Gill has witnessed—and partially resigned himself to—the new standards for communication. "I wonder if it's possible to have a normal adolescent life without a cell phone," says Gill, who reflects in "Good-bye to 'Hello'" (page 104) on the ways phones have changed how we interact. "Everybody is attached to a phone, not to each other," he says. "They've created another thing for us to be anxious about and irritated with."

GOLDSTEIN PHOTOGRAPHED BY JUSTIN BISHOP. PHOTOGRAPHS BY JERRY BAUER (2), COURTESY OF A. A. GILL (4), COURTESY OF JAMES REGINATO (3)


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THE AGE OF MONEY



NIGEL PARRY

If we had to put a name on the times we are living in, we could do worse than calling it the Age of Money. I mean, you could rightfully say that every age is an age of money. This period is different, though, in that it seems to be about *only* money. Some of this is the result of seismic political shifts, such as China's ravenous embrace of capitalism. Some of it comes from re-structuring in the ways of finance, and the resulting billions minted through venture capital, private equity, and hedge funds. There are the vast fortunes created by the digital revolution. And there is always oil. A friend sent an e-mail recently reminding me just how much a billion is: a million seconds are equal to a little more than 11 days; a billion seconds equal almost 32 years.

Seven years have passed since Wall Street kneecapped the world economy with its out-of-control leveraging, predatory lending, and obtuse financial instruments designed to defraud investors. Just as traditional accounting went out the window, so did traditional accountability. The economy is recovering, but unlike the situation with the savings-and-loan crisis of the late 80s and early 90s—when more than 800 people were convicted for their actions—not a single one of the ringleaders of the subprime-mortgage scandal has gone to prison. The men who destroyed the firms they headed, either through incompetence or venality or both, walked away with tens of millions of dollars—in some cases, hundreds of millions. Not surprisingly, these men (and they were pretty much *all* men) are keeping low profiles behind high, manicured hedges. In "The Wrecking Crew," on page 146, contributing editor William D. Cohan reports on his efforts to track these offenders down. Some are pariahs—nonpeople even to their former colleagues in the financial community. Then there are the leaders who played their own roles in the market's collapse but managed to steer their firms through the crisis. JPMorgan Chase C.E.O. Jamie Dimon and Goldman Sachs president Gary Cohn, among others, sat for extensive interviews with Cohan, and they—particularly Dimon—had revealing things to say about how they experienced the crisis and how they view its aftermath.

Those high, manicured hedges cast long, dark shadows. And few recent stories illustrate this better than the killing of hedge-fund founder Thomas Gilbert Sr. The 70-year-old Gilbert, a Wall Street veteran and, to outward appearances, the embodiment of Wasp privilege and wealth, was found dead in his Manhattan apartment earlier this year. The grisly scene of the crime had reportedly been staged to look like a suicide, as if to implicate the financial pressures of his struggling hedge fund. Money may very well have been the cause of his demise, but with a more sinister bloodline: Gilbert's 30-year-old son, Thomas junior, is charged with his murder, allegedly after having been forced to endure a reduction in his $2,400 monthly allowance. In "A Gilded Rage," on page 156, Benjamin Wallace traces the unraveling of the troubled scion.

Father and son shared an elite pedigree of exclusive educations and club memberships within the hamlets of Manhattan and Long Island's East End. But Wallace's investigation reveals that the elder Gilbert struggled to maintain his patrician status and lifestyle in the face of business setbacks. His adult son, meanwhile, was accustomed to the trappings of wealth but had no clue as to its manner of creation. A growing litany of incidents—an arson investigation in the Hamptons; an order of protection for a former roommate; erratic behavior at various smart gatherings—was summed up by the evasive phrase "the Tommy situation." It was a situation that may have spun out of control one day on Beekman Place.

Many of the pieces in this issue relate to money. In "Wall Street's *Flash* Mob," on page 114, Michael Lewis writes forcefully about the reaction to his investigation into high-speed trading, which made his 2014 book *Flash Boys* an immediate best-seller. Bethany McLean profiles Mellody Hobson, a celebrated financial whiz who charms just about anyone who comes into her orbit—including her husband of two years, George Lucas, a man with a storied résumé himself. In "The Season of the Rich," on page 98, James Wolcott surveys the wealthy as they have been portrayed on TV, from *Gilligan's Island* and *The Beverly Hillbillies* right up to the flesh eaters of *Revenge* and various Kardashian reality tragedies. Portraits by Annie Leibovitz capture bastions of the Old Order. For page 144, to note the collaboration of two great financial dynasties, she photographed David Rockefeller (who will turn 100 in June) and Jacob Rothschild. And for page 170 she photographed John Whitehead, former co-chairman of Goldman Sachs and one of the prime movers in the revitalization of Lower Manhattan following 9/11. The picture was taken shortly before Whitehead's death, at the age of 92.

Back in 1982, when *Forbes* magazine published its first Forbes Four Hundred, only 13 of the people on the list were billionaires. Today, *everyone* on the Forbes Four Hundred is a billionaire. When was the last time you even saw or heard the word "millionaire" used to describe someone? All those glass apartment towers in major financial hubs such as New York, Miami, and London: They're not really homes—they're safe-deposit boxes for foreign money. *The New York Times* reports that sales of residences in the city valued at more than $5 million have tripled in the past 10 years. There was an ad recently for an apartment on the Upper East Side that was renting for $450,000 a month—*$450,000 a month!* I read a startling figure in *The Wall Street Journal* (it was in the car column, but still): by 2020, $40 trillion in global assets will be controlled by a mere 250,000 people. In this crazy, monetized world, even the millionaires are getting left behind.

—GRAYDON CARTER

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PLAGUE DAYS Cleaning Guys crew members remove items from the Dallas apartment where Ebola victim Thomas Eric Duncan stayed, October 2014.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LM OTERO/A.P. IMAGES

IN THE HOT ZONE OF TEXAS

Dallas arrests an Ebola outbreak; a sheikh puts a shine on London's Dudley House; the Met Modern-izes its collection; and more

I couldn't put down Bryan Burrough's article on the Ebola outbreak in Dallas ["Trial by Ebola," February]. As a resident of that city, I'm really impressed by all the people involved in the story, whether center stage or backstage. Judge Jenkins and Mayor Rawlings made it up as they went, and they did a damned good job. All of the epidemiologists, nurses, police, firemen, and Fort Worth cleanup-crew members are heroes.

Thank you, *Vanity Fair,* for a great piece of history told in such a memorable way.

STACY CLARK
Dallas, Texas

Though the picture *Vanity Fair* painted of Judge Jenkins in Bryan Burrough's article was accurate, the criticism of the C.D.C. was unwarranted. The C.D.C. came in to assist Dallas County, not to take over. It is politically unwise for a federal agency to wrest control from a local government when the latter has jurisdiction. As the county was adequately equipped to handle the outbreak, the C.D.C. was right to act in a supporting role. Its response was flawed only in failing to ensure that health-care workers knew how to use personal protective equipment properly.

It's also worth noting that the epidemiologists who worked so hard during the Ebola outbreak were not paid a dime extra for overtime and were not given compensatory time. They worked 12 to 16 hours each day, including weekends, for more than a month and were not compensated fairly for their efforts by Dallas County. They were motivated purely by their concern for public health.

JENNA MANHEIMER
Dallas, Texas

I'm a registered nurse with 30 years' experience in high-risk medicine, and I am shocked that a medical staff could be caught that off guard when Ebola showed up on its doorstep. Despite repeated warnings, given the epidemic in West Africa, it appears not to have crossed the threshold of possibility in their thinking.

Dallas skirted a major tragedy. Judge Jenkins ignored basic safety precautions, which could have put everyone at risk. Not wanting to "scare" people is not a legitimate reason not to wear a HAZMAT suit. Jenkins was lucky but not very smart.

The positive to take from this whole story is that we can identify the holes in our systems and address them. Next time we may not be so lucky.

AMY D. CRAWFORD
San Diego, California

RESTORATION DRAMA

As a frequent traveler to London and incurable Anglophile, I enjoyed your article detailing the exquisite restoration of Dudley House ["Sheikh Shack," by James Reginato, February]. There are, to my knowledge, two comparable properties in London still in private hands. The 60,000-square-foot 2–8a Rutland Gate was put on the market for £300 million by the es-

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tate of a Saudi royal. The equally magnificent Bridgewater House, across from St. James's Palace, is still owned by the family of the late Greek shipping magnate Yiannis Latsis. The exterior of Bridgewater House stood in for the fictitious Marchmain House in the 1981 ITV series *Brideshead Revisited.* Where else in central London can you still find a brass coachman's bell push?

JANICE BARNUM
San Gabriel, California

It appears the only misstep in decorating Dudley House is the rather artless display of Coco Pops, Cheerios, and various other cereal boxes in the breakfast room.

BEVERLY STEDMAN
Howard City, Michigan

MET MODERNIZED

Bob Colacello's wonderfully detailed exposé of machinations in the New York art world ["Might at the Museum," February] is reminiscent of Tom Wolfe. Even the world of fine art is sullied by the vanity of the very rich. It is sad to see the Met tainted by its association with David Koch, the Whitney treated with such sacrilege, and MoMA reduced to an also-ran in terms of its Cubist collection—to say nothing of the grand Guggenheim's being totally ignored and insulted in the mêlée. The Lauder-Campbell sideshow distracts from the devotion of true art-lovers of all social strata.

CHARLES H. CRAIN
Alexandria, Virginia

When may we expect the completion of the David H. Koch Plaza at the Met, with the caps on the columns finally unveiled to reveal the carved faces of such Tea Party notables as Paul, Cruz, King, and Gohmert?

DON POGOLOFF
Kingston, Washington

PIKE PIQUED

I love *Vanity Fair* and read every word of every issue as soon as I can. I am also halfway through devouring *Gone Girl* and was particularly interested in the Rosamund Pike feature ["*Gone* and Found," by Sam Kashner, February]. Imagine my dismay (which I expressed verbally in unprintable terms) when I learned the fate of Desi Collings halfway through the story.

I'm sure there are lots of other shocks and surprises in the remaining 200 pages of the book—I'll know by tonight—but sheesh, y'all, a spoiler alert would have been a swell idea.

KATHY CULLERTON
Atlanta, Georgia

I DREAM OF GINA

Thanks, *Vanity Fair,* for a glimpse into the life of the legendary Gina Lollobrigida ["Twilight of the Goddess," by James Reginato, February]. I'm also intrigued by the new technology feature that allows a Ducati Superbike to stand all on its own.

STEVE MEDICOFF
Calgary, Alberta

CORRECTIONS:
On page 176 of our December issue ("NCIS: Provence: The Van Gogh Mystery," by Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith), we misidentified the proprietor of the Wild West Show. It was Buffalo Bill Cody.

On page 339 of the March issue ("Kim Jong Un's Supreme Dilemma," by Mark Bowden), we misattributed a quotation to John Delury, a professor at Yonsei University, and reported the quotation incorrectly. The quotation was from Brian Myers, a professor at Dongseo University, who said that some North Korean defectors who visited his classroom in South Korea described North Korea as a "cool place," one in which they wish they could have remained.

Letters to the editor should be sent electronically with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to letters@vf.com. All requests for back issues should be sent to subscriptions@vf.com. All other queries should be sent to vfmail@vf.com. The magazine reserves the right to edit submissions, which may be published or otherwise used in any medium. All submissions become the property of Vanity Fair. *A number of the letters included here originally appeared as comments submitted to VF.com.*

More from the V.F. MAILBAG



Gail Singer, a subscriber of 31 years from Houston, got a scare when she received the February issue and **failed to identify the cover subject**—something that had never happened before. "**It's all downhill now,**" she reports having concluded, initially. "However, upon reading the article ["*Gone* and Found," by Sam Kashner], I learned that Rosamund Pike is **not an established star icon.**" In other words? "**Whew!**"

"Thank you for the **rare interview with Miss Gina Lollobrigida,**" writes Diane Heller, from Los Angeles ("Twilight of the Goddess," by James Reginato). "I have been a fan since the age of two, when I used to say her name when prompted, 'Who is your favorite actress?' 'Gina Lollobrigida!' **Maybe I just liked saying her name** . . . Now *V.F.* has reminded me of how wonderful the lady behind the name is."

(Confession: the Mailbag, too, has always enjoyed saying it: ***Gina Lollobrigida!*** Who wouldn't?)

Department of Answers to Survey Questions That We Don't Remember Ever Having Asked: "I just received an **unsolicited issue of *Vanity Fair,***" begins a letter from someone in Plano, Texas. "[I assume] that I was sent this free issue as a marketing strategy to **spark my interest in the magazine.** It had the complete opposite effect. I viewed it very negatively, like a **phone solicitation disturbing my peace at home.** I am not opening the magazine, and instead of feeling at least neutral about *Vanity Fair,* I **now have negative feelings.**"

(Incidentally, someone about whom our feelings have never been negative or neutral: *Gina Lollobrigida!*)

A lot of mail reacting to Bryan Burrough's "Trial by Ebola." Here's just one sample: "Anyone in the country will see these same **threads of comic imbecility** in his city, but Dallas is mine," writes Lawrence Brautigam from, well, you know from where. "It is **hard not to find gallows humor** in the stupidity surrounding the Dallas handling of the Ebola patient." And it goes on (and on) from there.

Before we go on and on, a **memo to Graydon,** if he happens to be reading this: a casting director from *Law and Order: SVU* has written, wanting to get in touch with your "representative" about your doing "**a possible cameo.**" To whom should we direct him? If memory serves, you share an agent with . . . ***Gina Lollobrigida!***

ILLUSTRATION BY GIACOMO GAMBINERI

Amanda Seyfried



An aura of radiance.

In a single stroke, your skin's the star.
Our most innovative powder foundation,
formulated with Illuminating Treatment Powder,*
imparts newborn translucence and luminosity.
Artfully applied with an exquisitely crafted brush,
the finish becomes one with skin — stunningly smooth,
beautiful and endlessly radiant.

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voile fluide transparent / sheer fluid veil
teint poudre éclat / radiant powder foundation SPF 23
pinceau (teint poudre) / brush (powder foundation)
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[illegible] (radiant powder foundation)

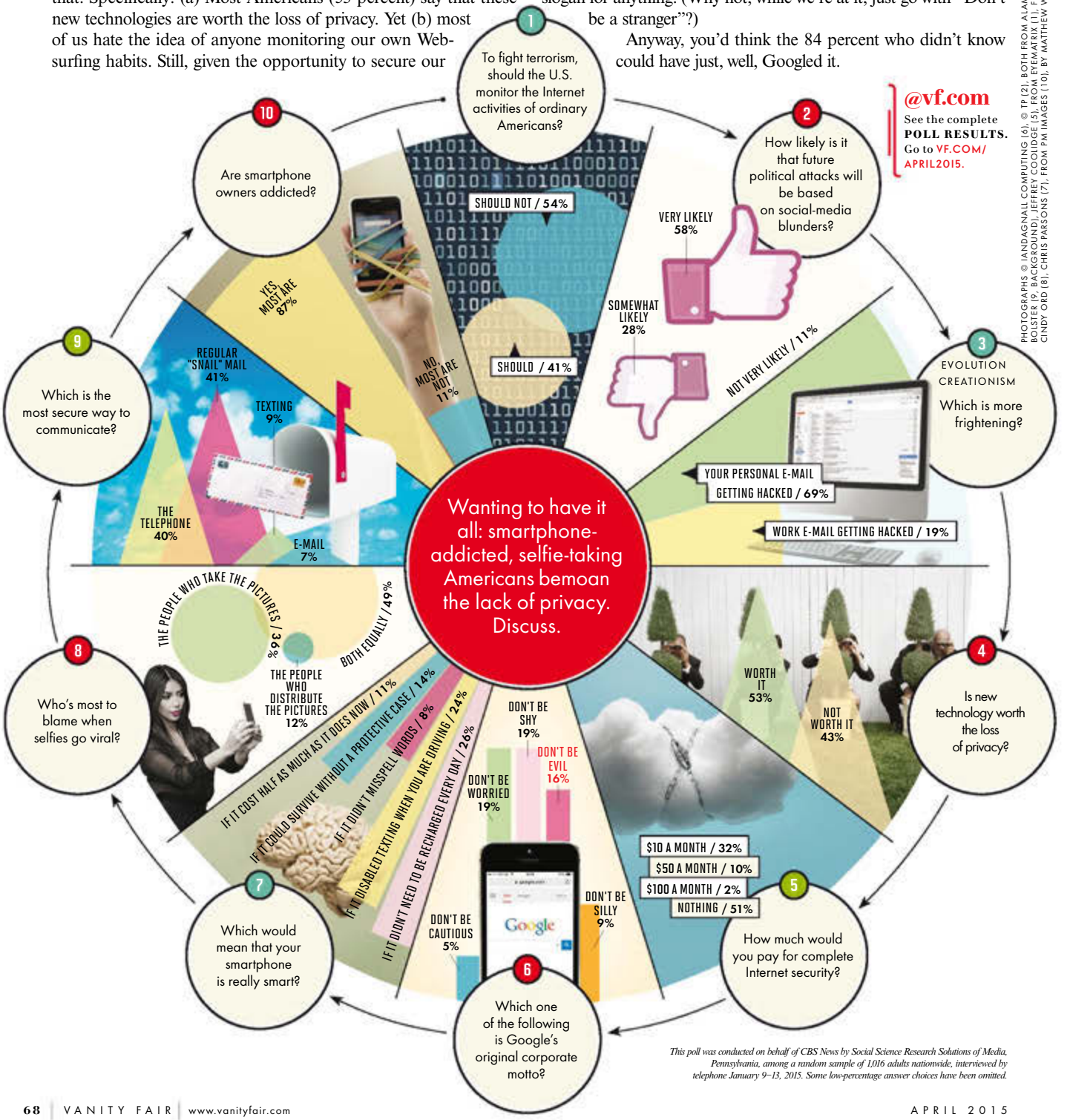
clé de peau
BEAUTÉ

DELETE, DELETE, DELETE

In this month's poll, Americans reckon with a complicated matter: our privacy versus our ever expanding, intrusive, and pervasive new technologies. (How pervasive? Well, 87 percent of us say people are "addicted" to their smartphones.) Despite the trickiness of the issue, to us it's crystal clear: a majority of us are not O.K. with being spied on, but we also aren't willing to pay to prevent that. Specifically: (a) Most Americans (53 percent) say that these new technologies are worth the loss of privacy. Yet (b) most of us hate the idea of anyone monitoring our own Web-surfing habits. Still, given the opportunity to secure our privacy with even a small monthly fee, we're (c) just not interested.

By the way, most of us can't identify "Don't be evil" as Google's original slogan. Only 16 percent of Americans were aware of this fact, while 19 percent thought the slogan was "Don't be shy," which is actually an early Cat Stevens song, and another 19 percent thought it was "Don't be worried," which is actually a pretty lame slogan for anything. (Why not, while we're at it, just go with "Don't be a stranger"?)

Anyway, you'd think the 84 percent who didn't know could have just, well, Googled it.



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See the complete **POLL RESULTS.** Go to VF.COM/APRIL2015.

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This poll was conducted on behalf of CBS News by Social Science Research Solutions of Media, Pennsylvania, among a random sample of 1,016 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone January 9–13, 2015. Some low-percentage answer choices have been omitted.


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A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME – WITH RIMOWA

The 1920s marked the beginning of modern air travel and the golden age of Hollywood. In 1919, Hugo Junkers presented the world's first all-metal commercial aircraft. It was made using the aircraft alum num alloy discovered by Alfred Wilm in 1906. In 1950, RIMOWA presented its suitcase with the unmistakable grooved design made of the same material – at the time, it was the lightest suitcase in the world. RIMOWA was a real pioneer in the sector, starting the trend for lightweight luggage back then.



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TAKING *Stock*

Ancient Egypt's vocation? **PHARAOH**

The Renaissance's avocation? Giving **DONATELLO** his big break.

Turn to page **74** for our *über*-rich roundup through the ages.

THIS MONTH

OMNI-DOWNLOADS
God's app-store purchases, from "**LET THERE BE LIGHT**" to "**TINDEITY**." PAGE 76

VANITIES



GERARD WEARS A TOP BY RED VALENTINO; SKIRT BY MICHAEL KORS; SHOES BY TABITHA SIMMONS.

STYLED BY VANESSA CHOW; HAIR PRODUCTS BY LEONOR GREYL; MAKEUP PRODUCTS AND NAIL ENAMEL BY CHANEL; HAIR BY FELIX FISCHER; MAKEUP BY JODIE BOLAND; MANICURE BY MICHIKA KOIDE; PROPS STYLED BY JARED LAWTON; FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS

CAITLIN GERARD

AGE: 26. **PROVENANCE:** Los Angeles. **SPEAK EASY:** Gerard grew up speaking three languages—English, German, and French. "My sister and I had the ability to switch into different languages. It worked in our favor." **PAYING HER DUES:** Gerard booked her first commercial when approached on the street before attending U.C.L.A. "I thought, Oh, this is a good way to pay for school." **ON ACTING:** "I was going to school because I didn't trust my [acting] ability. But the more I did it, the more I fell in love with it." **BREAKING OUT:** She had bit roles in *The Social Network* and *Magic Mike,* and is starring in Oscar winner John Ridley's highly anticipated drama series, *American Crime,* which premieres this month on ABC. "I've worked with really good directors, but, to be honest, this project changed everything for me." **OVERCOMING THE ODDS:** "I remember getting the audition. I did not believe there was a chance in hell that I could get the part." **ON HER CHARACTER:** "I'm so fascinated by Aubry. She is at the center of this crazy storm and tries to escape the hardships and realities of her life by doing drugs." **HEAD-SPACE:** Gerard keeps a philosophical perspective about what's next. "The paycheck actually doesn't matter as long as what I'm doing is meaningful to me."

—KRISTA SMITH


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An Italian Travel Diary - The Glass House


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We Are *the* .001 Percent

An essential guide to incomprehensible wealth across the ages

By ADAM LEFF *and* RICHARD RUSHFIELD



ERA
Ancient Egypt
AVATAR
Ramesses II

VOCATION Pharaoh.

AVOCATION Erecting temples dedicated to himself.

STREET CRED Led one-million-person army.

BILLION-DOLLAR IDEA Start propaganda department.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURE Uraeus headdress, prehistoric soul patch, crown.

RESIDENCE Piramesse royal city.

FAVORED ARCHITECTURE Sandstone human/animal-hybrid spectacular.



LOOMING NEMESIS The Nubians.

SKELETON IN THE CLOSET Wore man makeup.

PET PEEVE Rivers turning to blood.

PREFERRED SNACK FOOD The blue-lotus aphrodisiac.

HANGOUT Artificial barge-rowing lake at Malkata.

PICKUP LINE "Bring me to the daughter of Ptolemeus."

LITTLE BUDDY Queen Nefertari.



ERA
The Renaissance
AVATAR
Cosimo de'Medici

VOCATION Banker and uncrowned monarch of Florence.

AVOCATION Giving Donatello his big break.

STREET CRED Impossible to assassinate.

BILLION-DOLLAR IDEA Audit the Pope.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURE Red chef's hat, puffy tunic, gherkin.

RESIDENCE Palazzo Medici Riccardi and a dozen or so country villas.

FAVORED ARCHITECTURE Low-profile rusticated palazzo.

LOOMING NEMESIS The Borgias.

SKELETON IN THE CLOSET The first Mafia godfather of Italy.



PET PEEVE Pumpkin slops (short breeches).

PREFERRED SNACK FOOD A fat puller and a loin of mutton.

HANGOUT Papal apartment.

PICKUP LINE "Pius II was wondering if you would join us for a drink."

LITTLE BUDDY Piero the Gouty.



ERA
The Gilded Age
AVATAR
Cornelius Vanderbilt

VOCATION Railroad man.

AVOCATION Building Grand Central Terminal.

STREET CRED Born and raised on Staten Island.

BILLION-DOLLAR IDEA People want to get off of Staten Island.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURE Top hat, monocle, prodigious muttonchops.

RESIDENCE Four-story town house on 10 Washington Place.



FAVORED ARCHITECTURE Stately Gothic fortress with gargoyles.

LOOMING NEMESIS Jay Gould.

SKELETON IN THE CLOSET Married his cousin.

PET PEEVE Muckrakers.

PREFERRED SNACK FOOD Fancy cake and sweet pickles.

HANGOUT The smoking room.

PICKUP LINE "Want to see a daguerreotype of me and Ruthie B. Hayes on New Year's Eve?"

LITTLE BUDDY Thomas Edison.



ERA
The New Gilded Age
AVATAR
Mark Zuckerberg

VOCATION Employee 1.

AVOCATION Vegetarianism.



STREET CRED Dropped out of Harvard.

BILLION-DOLLAR IDEA Nerds need help getting the girl.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURE Favicon-emblazoned hoodie, headset microphone.

RESIDENCE Fort Zuckerberg in Dolores Heights.

FAVORED ARCHITECTURE Zoob Construction Set Modern.

LOOMING NEMESIS The Winklevii.



SKELETON IN THE CLOSET Mediocre coder.

PET PEEVE Co-founders.

PREFERRED SNACK FOOD Free whole-wheat fajita wrap from HQ food court.

HANGOUT Sand Hill Road Starbucks.

PICKUP LINE "I have the G.D.P. of Bolivia."

LITTLE BUDDY Dustin Moskovitz.

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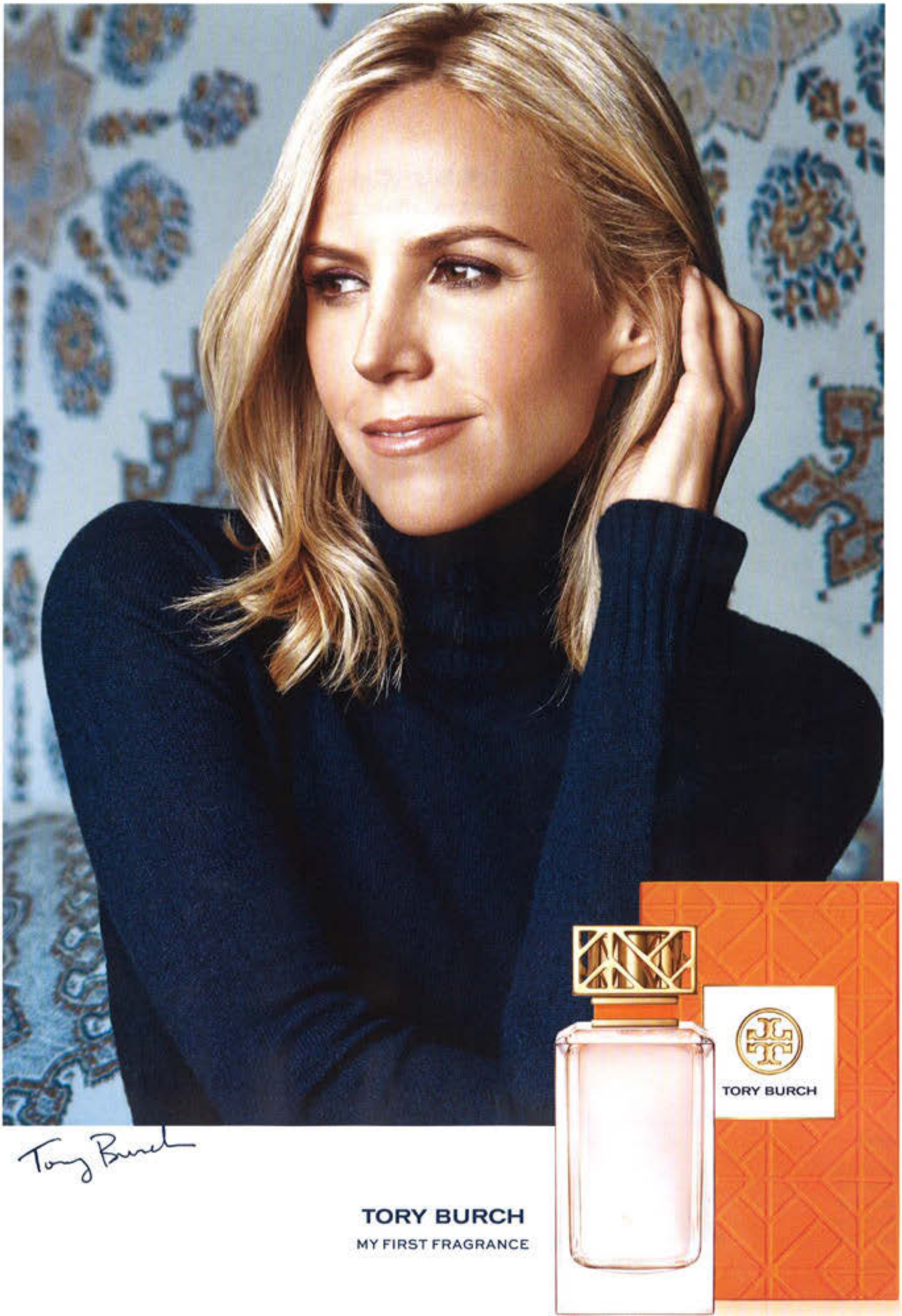
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The APPS OF GOD

By TEDDY WAYNE | *Illustration by* OLIVER MUNDAY

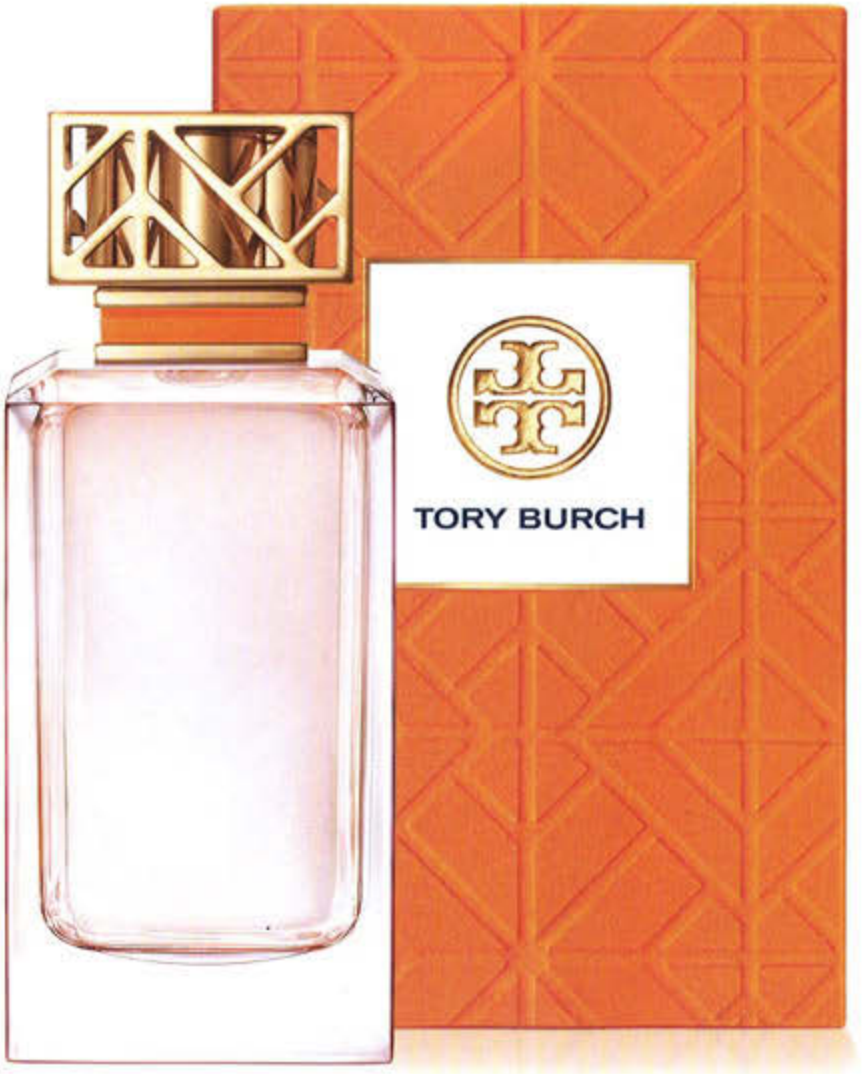




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MY FIRST FRAGRANCE



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VANITY FAIR

agenda ›

ADVERTISING
PROMOTION
EVENTS
OPPORTUNITIES



GIVE

Oxfam

One person in three in the world lives in poverty. Oxfam is determined to change that world by mobilizing the power of people against poverty. Around the globe, Oxfam works to find practical, innovative ways for people to lift themselves out of poverty and thrive. The organization saves lives and helps rebuild livelihoods when crisis strikes. Oxfam campaigns so that the voices of the poor influence the local and global decisions that affect them. To learn more, visit **oxfamamerica.org.**





EXPERIENCE

Clarins Spa at Miraval

Soak up the Arizona sunshine and experience the award-winning Miraval Life in Balance Spa by Clarins. Grab your best friends, moms, or sisters and escape to Miraval for an unforgettable wellness retreat. Book our Girls Getaway Package and receive a complimentary Clarins treatment and $150 nightly resort credit for spa services and activities. To learn more, visit **miravalresorts.com.**



EXPERIENCE

Live Nation Presents New Kids on the Block

New Kids on the Block are stepping into the ring in 2015. The pop phenoms will headline a summer tour with very special guests, Grammy Award®–winning and multi-platinum selling artists TLC and Nelly. The tour, promoted by Live Nation, kicks off on May 1 in Las Vegas and will stop in more than 30 cities across North America. Tickets are available at **livenation.com.**



EXPERIENCE

Street Food Cinema

Evolving the outdoor movie-going experience, Street Food Cinema brings together pop-culture films with emerging music artists, gourmet food trucks, games, and celebrity guests. Street Food Cinema, now in its fourth year, is the largest outdoor movie series in Los Angeles, drawing thousands of attendees with 48 events across the city. Producers Heather Hope-Allison and Steve Allison, from TIL Lifestyle Marketing and Events, plan to expand into other cities soon. The 2015 season runs May through October. Visit **streetfoodcinema.com.**



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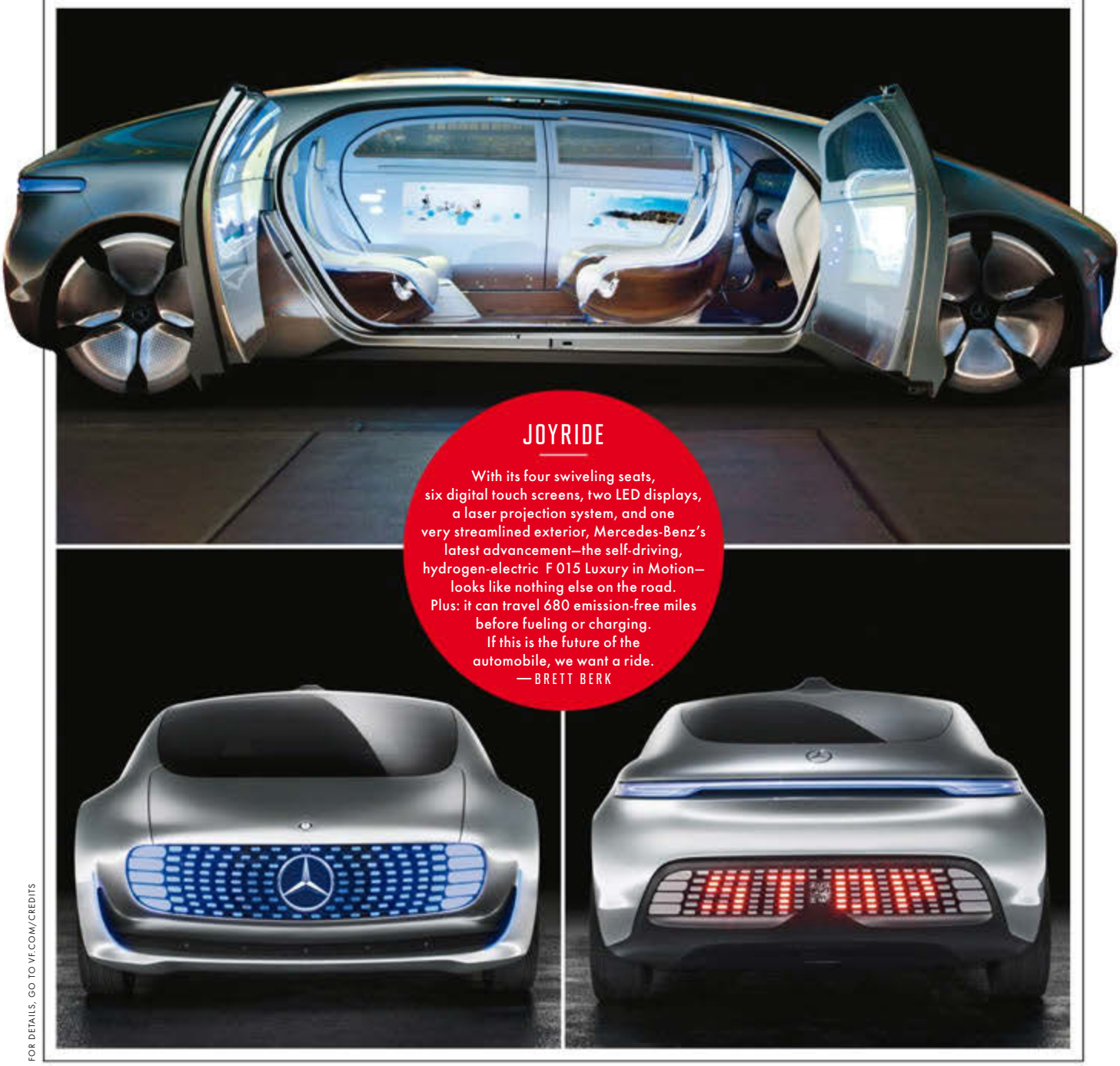


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Fanfair

➳ ALL EYES ON IRIS *p. 82* BEEK SANDALS *p. 82* *EMPIRE*'S MUSIC MAN *p. 84* MY STUFF: CASSANDRA HUYSENTRUYT GREY *p. 88* AND MORE...



JOYRIDE

With its four swiveling seats, six digital touch screens, two LED displays, a laser projection system, and one very streamlined exterior, Mercedes-Benz's latest advancement—the self-driving, hydrogen-electric F 015 Luxury in Motion—looks like nothing else on the road. Plus: it can travel 680 emission-free miles before fueling or charging. If this is the future of the automobile, we want a ride.

—BRETT BERK

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Iris Apfel, photographed by Bruce Weber for *Vogue Italia*, 2007.

All About Iris

When **Iris Apfel** was a young woman from Queens, New York, starting out in the fashion industry, Frieda Loehmann, founder of the famed department store, took her aside: "She said, 'You're not pretty and you'll never be pretty, but it doesn't matter. You have something much better. You have style.'"

Apfel, now 93 and a certifiable icon, is the subject of *Iris,* a new documentary, out next month, by **Albert Maysles**—who, with his late brother David, directed such classics as *Gimme Shelter* and *Grey Gardens.* Without Apfel, whose idiosyncratic style and Mr. Magoo–size eyewear inspired a 2005–6 exhibition at the Met, we would likely not be seeing the rise of the senior supermodel: Joan Didion for Céline, Charlotte Rampling for Nars, Jessica Lange for Marc Jacobs Beauty, Joni Mitchell for Yves Saint Laurent. Apfel herself is the new face of Kate Spade.

This "rare bird of fashion," as she is now known, first came to prominence in the 1950s, when she and her husband, Carl—who turned 100 during filming—founded Old World Weavers, a textile company hired by nine presidents for White House restorations. In *Iris,* we see Apfel mingle with Bruce Weber, Jenna Lyons, and Kanye West, while behind the closed doors of her Park Avenue apartment she quietly grapples with old age. Fashion, she says, never keeps her up at night. "Matters of health and things like that [do]. Things that are really important." —MAUREEN CALLAHAN

We Are Obsessed With ...



This stunning South Sea golden-pearl necklace and blue-diamond pebble ring are 2 of the more than 200 one-of-a-kind jewels, designed by Francesca Amfitheatrof, from **Tiffany & Co.'s** *Blue Book 2015: The Art of the Sea,* a collection that is sure to make waves. (tiffany.com) —L.J.E.





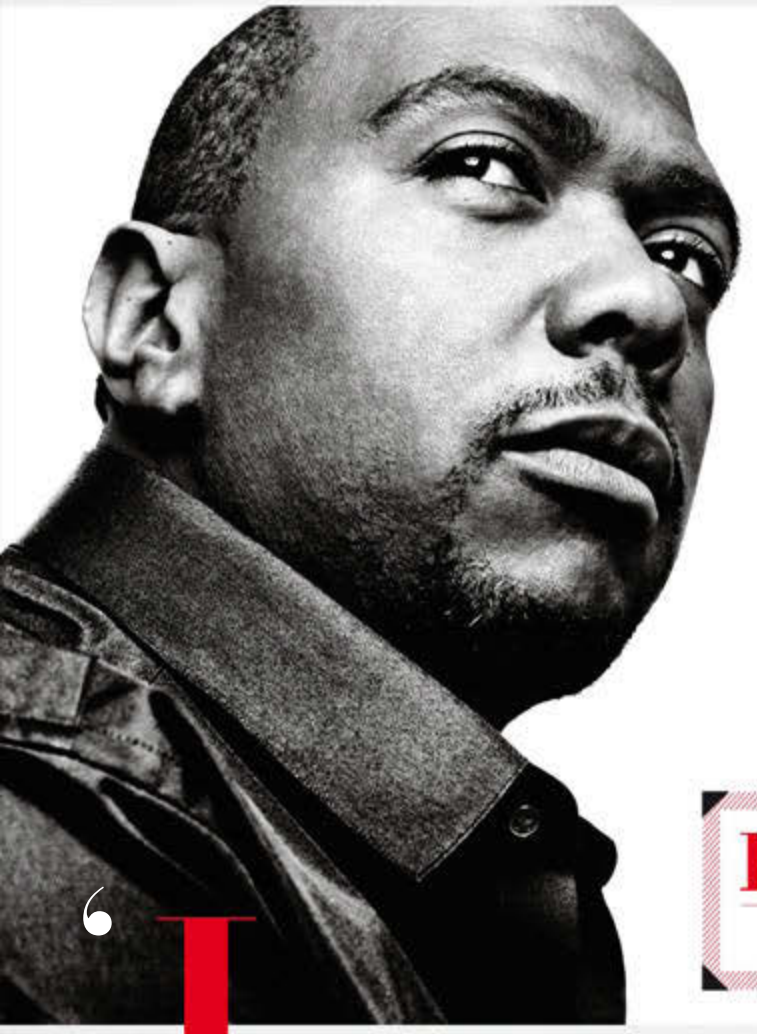
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You'll covet **Beek's** leather sandals (with arch support!), which only get better with age. Newport Beach, California, designers Birgit Klett and Kenna Bertell Florie introduce their first collection—handmade in Mexico—this month. (beekshop.com) —P.H.



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WE'RE NOT BAD PEOPLE,
BUT WE DID A BAD THING.
NETFLIX
A NETFLIX ORIGINAL SERIES
BLOODLINE
ALL EPISODES
March 20



Hot Tracks

TIMBALAND

Justin Timberlake's "Sexy Back," Kanye West's "Stronger," and Jay Z's "Dirt off Your Shoulder" are just three of the many—*many*—hits worked on, or produced, by **Timbaland.** Now he's bringing his authoritative beats and hitmaking touch to the music for the smash Fox TV drama *Empire*—set in the world of hip-hop and the music business—starring Terrence Howard and Taraji P. Henson. It's a world that Timbaland (born Timothy Z. Mosley) knows well. He's had hits with his own albums, as well as producing and writing songs for a massive number of artists that include Aaliyah, Missy Elliott, Usher, Nas, Rihanna, Björk, and the aforementioned Timberlake, West, and Jay Z. Here, Timbaland talks with **Lisa Robinson** about music, re-invention, and *Empire.*

LISA ROBINSON: **How did you get involved with *Empire*?**

TIMBALAND: I was looking for Lee Daniels [the movie director and *Empire*'s co-creator] to write something for my album, and he was like, "Oh wow, I need you for the music for my show." As we went along, I put my thing on the back burner, and I thought that this show could really be something. There's nothing out there like this, and it came out at the perfect time.

L.R.: **You're the executive producer of the music for *Empire*—how does that differ from the work you've done with the artists you've produced?**

T.: Well, I don't look at what I've done in the past, I look at what I'm setting up for the future. I feel like every six years the greats kind of revamp themselves—and for me, *Empire* is like a first step of my re-invention.

L.R.: **Do you create the music starting with beats, or do you work music into the script?**

T.: There's no form or method to how it works. Sometimes things are written to beats, or we go over the script. I've got a great relationship with (*Empire* producer) Brian Grazer, and Lee is letting me be free—letting me interpret the words into music and emotion. Also, I have a team of great people, like Jim Beanz—he writes most of the work, and I tell him the concept of what I want; I oversee it, I listen to it, I change a word here, or add something to a beat, switch that over there . . . like that.

L.R.: **What do you think of the show?**

T.: If they keep the culture correct, it's just real. You see where [the characters] started from. You can be living fabulous, but your past culture is going to come up. At the end of the day, a lot of us come from poverty, from having nothing to building something and keeping our dream. What a lot of us have in common is we come from never giving up—non-quitters, no matter what the circumstances.

L.R.: **Does anyone connected with the show ask you to try to get some of your famous friends to guest-star?**

T.: Nah, this is Fox. This is a network that's been around, and they're very professional. It would be kind of unprofessional to ask me. This is not their first rodeo.

L.R.: **What else are you working on these days?**

T.: I've got a label partnership now with (Epic Records chairman and C.E.O.) L. A. Reid. I'm producing a 19-year-old girl named Tink, who's going to change things back to the days of Lauryn Hill and Missy Elliott—girls who gave you substance the way Biggie Smalls and Tupac did. And a singer named V. Bozeman—and while I don't like comparing people to other people, she's going to give you that feeling that Whitney Houston gave you. They're also on my [forthcoming] album, *Opera Noir,* which is like nothing you've heard before. What I'm trying to find are these young people who have the same hunger and passion I once had and still have, and pass it on to the future. I feel I can be a mentor and help make new music that will break through some of the garbage. When music starts to fall off the path, with dumbness and flashiness, well, it's my job to set a tone, a foundation. If you want quality music, come up on the Timbaland side of the street.



The cast of *Empire:* Malik Yoba, Trai Byers, Kaitlin Doubleday, Taraji P. Henson, Terrence Howard, Grace Gealey, Bryshere Gray, Jussie Smollett, and Gabourey Sidibe.

PHOTOGRAPHS: TOP, BY PLATON/TRUNK ARCHIVE; BOTTOM, BY NINO MUÑOZ/FOX


BE ONE OF ONE.
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300 BOUTIQUES. 1 ADDRESS.



From left: President John F. Kennedy relaxes aboard the presidential yacht, the *Honey Fitz*, early 1960s; Cheryl Tiegs models on a sailboat, 1967; Luciano Benetton's *Tribù* at the Monaco Yacht Show, 2007—all from *The Stylish Life: Yachting*, by Kim Kavin (teNeues).

Hot Type

Hail the culture-quakers. Notorious truth-teller **Renata Adler** swings her big braid with a passion in *After the Tall Timber* (New York Review Books)—a quiver of her exceptional and unsparing nonfiction. Childless-by-choice authors dare to out themselves in **Meghan Daum's** provocative anthology *Selfish, Shallow and Self-Absorbed* (Picador).

The service staff of America's First Families air the linen in **Kate Andersen Brower's** *The Residence* (HarperCollins). *The Blondes* (Thomas Dunne) in **Emily Schultz's** novel have fallen prey to a disease that makes them killers. Race, faith, and home intertwine in poet **Tracy K. Smith's** illuminating memoir, *Ordinary Light* (Knopf). **Amit Chaudhuri's** *Odysseus Abroad* (Knopf) is a day-long journey with two Indian émigrés living in London. **Masha Gessen** follows the fuse that sparked *The Brothers* (Riverhead) Tsarnaev's plot to bomb the Boston Marathon. Poet **Cate Marvin** channels the colorful voices of Staten Island in *Oracle* (Norton). **Ann Packer's** *The Children's Crusade* (Scribner) is an artful portrait of a California family. The science-denying society in **Jeffrey Rotter's** *The Only Words That Are Worth Remembering* (Metropolitan) pays in loneliness. **Larry Kramer's** magnum opus opens with *The American People, Volume 1: Search for My Heart* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux). The Third Reich draws to a close in the late **Walter Kempowski's** *Swansong 1945* (Norton). **Roseanne Montillo** captures the U.S.'s youngest serial killer in *The Wilderness of Ruin* (Morrow). **Michael Shnayerson** gets in the ring with Governor Andrew Cuomo in *The Contender* (Twelve). Three adults relive childhood sexual abuse in **Rafael Yglesias's** *The Wisdom of Perversity* (Algonquin). **Marc Peyser** and **Timothy Dwyer** eavesdrop on *Hissing Cousins* (Nan A. Talese) Eleanor Roosevelt and Alice Roosevelt Longworth. **Carol Weston's** *Ava and Taco Cat* (Sourcebooks) is purrfect. **Peter Slevin** gives *Michelle Obama* (Knopf) a standing O. **Fatima Bhutto's** commanding debut, *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* (Penguin), unfolds on the Afghan border as the Americans invade. **Jill Alexander Essbaum's** *Hausfrau* (Random House) finds adultery easier than marriage. Irreverent, wise, and boundlessly generous **Abigail Thomas** tells us *What Comes Next and How to Like It* (Scribner). —ELISSA SCHAPPELL

A *Cut* Above

If you were at Columbia University in the mid-1970s, you couldn't help but notice Brad Gooch and Howard Brookner—an impossibly golden couple.



Not only were they beautiful, they were talented. Howard hung out with William Burroughs and made an acclaimed documentary about him while Brad worked as a male model and got a Ph.D. in English. The dream crumbled when Howard tragically and gruesomely died of AIDS, in 1989. Brad went on to write important biographies of Frank O'Hara and Flannery O'Connor and has now written *Smash Cut* (Harper), a gorgeous memoir of his and Howard's romance, played out in New York City, on Fire Island, and in Paris and Rome, among the era's boldfaced names, such as Andy Warhol and Robert Mapplethorpe—a potent mix of love, art, and death. —DOUG STUMPF



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAIN BENAINOUS/GAMMA-RAPHO/GETTY IMAGES (*TRIBÙ*); © CONDÉ NAST ARCHIVE/CORBIS (TIEGS); © CORBIS (KENNEDY); BY TIM HOUT (BOOKS). FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS

IN SHORT

Philip Glass composes his life in *Words Without Music* (Liveright). **William Wellman Jr.** recounts the life of his father, Hollwood director *Wild Bill Wellman* (Pantheon). **David Brooks** paves *The Road to Character* (Random House). **Sofka Zinovieff** divulges family secrets in *The Mad Boy, Lord Berners, My Grandmother, and Me* (Harper). **Jay A. Clarke** reconstructs *Machine Age Modernism* (Clark Art Institute). Praise **Chen Guangcheng,** the blind Chinese activist and *The Barefoot Lawyer* (Henry Holt). **Peter J. Cohen** flashes vintage *Snapshots of Dangerous Women* (Universe). Mother of Milk Bar "Crack Pie" **Christina Tosi** serves the savory in *Milk Bar Life* (Clarkson Potter). **Colm Tóibín** reflects *On Elizabeth Bishop* (Princeton). **Louis Begley's** *Killer, Come Hither* (Nan A. Talese) beckons. *The Bergdorf Goodman Cookbook* (Harper Design) is delish. **Taylor Owen** traces the networks of *Disruptive Power* (Oxford). **Amy Scheibe** debuts with *A Fireproof Home for the Bride* (St. Martin's). Escape with *India Hicks: Island Style* (Rizzoli). —E.S.


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My Stuff

CASSANDRA HUYSENTRUYT GREY

Two years ago, Cassandra Huysentruyt Grey, inspired by the glamour of Hollywood, launched **Violet Grey** as a multi-platform beauty enterprise with a digital-magazine component, and later opened a store on Melrose Place, in Los Angeles. The selection of coveted products, which has been curated by top makeup artists and skin-care experts, has helped to make Violet Grey the go-to space for those in pursuit of beauty secrets. Grey, a savvy entrepreneur with a sassy pixie cut, shares her favorite things . . .









CLOTHES

Jeans **Acne high-waisted in black and tailored vintage Levi's for a more modern silhouette.** Underwear **Fleur du Mal x Violet Grey in Blush Bombshell.** Watch **My iPhone.** Day bag **The Row, oversize and nondescript.** Favorite accessory **Mr. Grey in a black suit, white shirt, and black knit tie.** Favorite designers **Ashley Olsen and Mary-Kate Olsen.** Shopping mecca **Melrose Place in L.A. It's sort of an outdoor Barneys, Chloé, The Row, Isabel Marant, DVF, and Violet Grey. For black-tie Lily et Cie.** Boots **Hermès riding boots. They are expensive but will last a lifetime.** Flats **Manolo Blahnik.**



HOME

Where do you live **In L.A., I live next door to where they filmed *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, and in N.Y.C. I live on 76th and Madison.** Favorite pieces of art in house **For our one-year wedding anniversary, my husband gave me a Les Lalanne black sheep, which is definitely my favorite thing in the world.** Sheets **Yves Delorme.** Luggage **I know this is obnoxious, but I am wild for white luggage. Tom Ford and Goyard are my jam.** China **Nymphenburg.** Stationery **Tiffany's, white-on-white tissue.** Pets **Two bullmastiffs, Enzo and Izzabella. They are trained to kill poachers.** Favorite flowers **Garden roses.** Favorite gadget **Is Netflix considered a gadget?** Favorite neighborhood restaurant **Nate 'n Al in L.A. and 3 Guys in N.Y.C.** Favorite dessert **Lemon meringue pie.** Favorite snack **French fries with mayonnaise.** Coffee-table book ***Mirror of Venus.*** TV bingeing ***Broadchurch, The Fall, The Missing*, and my favorite is a French series called *Engrenages*.**





Cassandra Huysentruyt Grey, photographed at Violet Grey, in Los Angeles.



INSPIRATIONS

Inspirations **Guy Bourdin photography, Twombly drawings on paper, Eminem, Albert Camus, Paris, Woody Allen, Tokyo, Martin Scorsese, Drake, Lauren Hutton, and Leonard Lauder.** Favorite discovery **That most learning happens outside of your comfort zone.** Who inspires you **My team at Violet Grey. I feel like the luckiest person in the world to work with exceptional people every day.** Necessary extravagance **La Mer.** Favorite place **At home with my family.** Favorite charity **An extraordinary organization of charter schools called KIPP.** Favorite movie ***Manhattan*.** Favorite hotel **The Ritz in Paris.** Are you on Instagram **@CassandraGrey** Fashion idol **Lee Radziwill.** Go-to Web site **youtube.com** Song in your head **Drake's "Started from the Bottom."**







BEAUTY PRODUCTS

Lipstick **Serge Lutens Nude Lip Palette.** Mascara **Armani Eyes to Kill.** Concealer **Chanel Correcteur Perfection. Simply the best concealer on the market.** Foundation **Armani Luminous Silk. (Thank you, Pat McGrath.)** Moisturizer **La Prairie Skin Caviar Luxe Cream—a miracle in a pretty blue jar.** Hair product **Leonor Greyl styling cream.** Soap **The soap from the Carlyle hotel.** Perfume **I prefer men's cologne, and recently I discovered that Old Spice has the same effect as wearing a men's jacket over your shoulders.** Toothpaste **Marvis.** Nail-polish color **Tom Ford Indigo Night.** Who cuts your hair **Lea Journo at the Beverly Wilshire hotel cut my hair and basically gave me a new and improved life as a result. I also use her prescribed shampoo.** Skin-care specialist **Shani Darden at Resurface in L.A. and Aida Bicaj in N.Y.C.**

GREY PHOTOGRAPHED BY ANDREW DURHAM; HAIR PRODUCTS BY ORIBE; MAKEUP PRODUCTS BY TOM FORD; HAIR AND MAKEUP BY STEVE DAYAULT. PHOTOGRAPHS BY GILBERT CARRASQUILLO/FILMMAGIC (OLSENS); GILBERT CARRASQUILLO/GETTY IMAGES (DRAKE); RON GALELLA/WIREIMAGE (RADZIWILL); RANKOMM/GETTY IMAGES (ROSES). FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS

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What You Should Know About

WILL FORTE

A PANOPLY OF ECCENTRIC BIOGRAPHICAL DATA RE: THE ALL-STAR *S.N.L.* ALUM

Will Forte seems so wholesome and unfailingly polite in person that you'd expect the former *Saturday Night Live* cast member of eight years to have roots in the Midwest, similar to his breakout dramatic character in Alexander Payne's *Nebraska.* But this good-natured 44-year-old hails from Northern California, with hearty family ties, a history degree from U.C.L.A., and a healthy dose of neurosis. This March, the *MacGruber* mastermind graduates to sitcom star with *The Last Man on Earth*—a Fox series he created about a temp worker who then finds himself in the titular premise. Come May, Forte will also appear alongside Owen Wilson and Jennifer Aniston in Peter Bogdanovich's ensemble comedy *She's Funny That Way,* as a playwright who unwittingly casts a call girl (Imogen Poots) to star in his Broadway production. In honor of Forte's marquee momentum, herewith a distillation of the man who once gave up a post-college job at a brokerage house in hopes of one day entertaining the masses.



FUNNY THAT WAY **Will Forte, photographed in Los Angeles.**

BORN ORVILLE Willis Forte IV to his namesake, a now retired stockbroker, and Patti, a former teacher, Forte plans on continuing the family name should he sire a son, reasoning, "I'm not going to be the person to break the chain." Until then, Forte commemorates his heritage with his Twitter handle: @OrvilleIV.

HE FILMED the births of his niece, Laney, five, and nephew, Alden, four, at the request of his only sibling, Michele, who is two years older. "My brother-in-law is a little squeamish," explains Forte of being recruited for his directorial delivery-room role.

HE LIVES in a modestly sized Craftsman home, built circa 1913, in Santa Monica that he purchased in 2002, just two weeks before being hired at *Saturday Night Live.* "It was not the greatest timing," Forte admits, adding that he never had the energy to decorate during those hectic years. Even now, some rooms "are kind of unfurnished."

HE UNWINDS by playing games, including Tiny Wings, Drop7, and 2048, on his iPhone 5: "I have achieved Tiny Wings master level, so I am very proud of that."

ARTIFACTS FROM his *S.N.L.* years include a "big fake ham," used in a sketch called "Give Up the Ham," which aired during the Queen Latifah–hosted episode in 2003. Another *S.N.L.* keepsake is a copy of *Live from New York: An Uncensored History of Saturday Night Live,* by Tom Shales and James Andrew Miller, signed by nearly every host and special guest during Forte's Studio 8H days, including President Obama, Robert De Niro, and Bono.

HIS MORNING showers usually last eight minutes, even when he is in a hurry. "I am a little O.C.D., and I feel like if I have any shampoo in my hair, my head is going to explode." He sudses with Nioxin shampoo (out of habit, not fear of hair loss, he says) and a bar of original Irish Spring soap.

HIS CLOSET is stocked with plaid, Western-style Salt Valley shirts, sizes medium and large, from Urban Outfitters.

HE IS partial to a pair of red-and-blue L.A. Clippers socks that he used to wear every time he took a flight. "It wasn't for superstition. . . . They just make a really comfortable sock at the Staples Center," Forte says, lifting up his pant leg to reveal his favorite pair.

THESE DAYS, the closest thing he has to a superstition is an O.C.D.-related ritual involving checking the sinks, showers, and stove in a specific pattern to make sure they are turned off. "I don't cook," says Forte, laughing. "So it is weird."

HE DRIVES a 2004 silver-gray Honda Civic hybrid. The CD player currently holds *The Kinks Are the Village Green Preservation Society,* and the only reason he'd want to upgrade vehicles is to "get a fancier music system."

HE AND Bruce Dern actually made the road trip shown in *Nebraska,* from Montana to the Cornhusker State. Alexander Payne followed them in the same R.V. that Jack Nicholson drove in Payne's previous film, *About Schmidt,* with a camera mounted on it to capture the action.

MacGRUBER WILL live to see another day on-screen if Forte, who has fleshed out a loose outline for a sequel, has his way. "It was such a fun thing, and we are so proud of that dumb little movie," the actor affectionately says of the 2010 comedy, which counts Christopher Nolan as a fan. "And it seems like we have a realistic shot of having someone let us make [part two]."

HE ENJOYED growing a beard for *The Last Man on Earth* for sociological observations alone. "People treat you a little differently with a big bushy beard," he says. "I had several people cross the street very obviously because they saw me coming at night" and knew that "a person with a good mental makeup would not make that facial-hair decision."

HIS NEIGHBORHOOD establishment where everyone knows his name is Shoop's deli, which features a version of his all-time favorite food: breakfast burritos. On a good week, Forte averages seven.

HE RANG in his 40th birthday, in June 2010, at the Gansevoort Turks and Caicos with his former *S.N.L.* castmate Jason Sudeikis and one of the show's previous writers, John Solomon. They celebrated by drinking beer on the beach and wakeboarding in the ocean.

CONTRARY TO Internet lore, Forte does not collect construction hats or life preservers. He was, however, presented with one of each, both painted gold, as a birthday present on the trip. The gilded safety equipment did *not* make it back to Santa Monica.

—JULIE MILLER

"I AM A LITTLE O.C.D."

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Out to Lunch with

STEPHEN DALDRY

THE DIRECTOR IS "QUEENING AROUND" ON BROADWAY, IN LONDON, AND FOR NETFLIX



By **JOHN HEILPERN**

Stephen Daldry, the director of the two most prestigious imports on Broadway this season, met me for lunch at Frankie and Johnnie's Steakhouse, the showbiz hangout and former speakeasy on West 45th Street. His acclaimed production of *The Audience,* starring Dame Helen Mirren as You Know Who, is playing on the same street, as is the revival of David Hare's 1995 *Skylight,* which opens on April 2 at the John Golden Theatre, starring Bill Nighy and Carey Mulligan as two embattled ex-lovers.

Mr. Daldry is a man who knows what he likes. He scarcely glanced at the menu before ordering lamb chops medium, side orders of sautéed spinach and mushrooms, and a bottle of San Pellegrino. He's a busy man who was soon to return to London to work on *The Crown,* the six-season TV saga for Netflix about the life and times of Queen Elizabeth II from 1947 onward. (Like *The Audience,* it was written by Peter Morgan.) "So we're still on the Queen, are we?," I said. "Yes," he replied cheerfully. "I'm queening around—as Her Majesty says about herself."

Mr. Daldry has met her a few times. Does Her Majesty remind him of Helen Mirren? He laughed and recalled the occasion when he was a producer of the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2012 London Olympics and Daniel Craig's James Bond famously met the Queen before she apparently parachuted into the stadium. "The real shock in the audience room at the palace was that it was the Queen," he said. "People expected it to be Helen Mirren!"

Stephen Daldry was born in 1961 and was raised in rural Somerset in the southwest of England. He is the son of a banker (he died when Stephen was 15) and describes his mother as "a cabaret *artiste* who was Somerset's answer to Eartha Kitt." Showbiz is therefore in his blood. After college, he decided to become a circus clown and toured Italy with a traveling circus. He says that, if need be, he could still ride an elephant while playing various musical instruments, walk the tightrope, juggle, unicycle, and perform both fire-eating and -blowing. His best trick, possibly, was to play a sousaphone out of which, on a precise note, a real duck appeared.

Mr. Daldry became well known in the 90s as the punk wunderkind artistic director of that "chorus of dissent," the Royal Court Theatre, in London. But he has always possessed a sure commercial touch. The first of his Tonys was for his inspired Hitchcockian reinvention of J. B. Priestley's old potboiler, *An Inspector Calls,* in 1994. Every time he went through New York customs, however, he was stopped when he told them he worked in theater. "They searched my bags as if I was involved in some illicit pornographic activity," he said. So he pretended he worked in movies. "No problem! Welcome to the U.S.A.! Good luck!"

He subsequently did work in movies, phenomenally receiving best-director Oscar nominations for his first three films—*Billy Elliot* (2000), *The Hours* (2002), and *The Reader* (2008). He comfortably bridges the cultural divide between Hollywood and theater. I assumed that his international success in both fields had made him wealthy. (The lucrative production of his Tony and Olivier Award–winning *Billy Elliot: The Musical* has been running for a decade in the West End.) But he says he's hopeless with money.

"Where is it all?" he wondered without rancor. "I tend to give it away or lose it. But, you know, what do you need money *for?* I don't spend it on clothes."

He spends it on other mundane things—restaurants, travel, and homes in London and New York. He's based mostly in Manhattan, where he lives communally in a rambling apartment with his wife, daughter, and extended family of numerous friends. Mr. Daldry, who has never made any secret that he's gay, announced to the surprise of many people in 2001 that he had married one of his oldest friends, downtown–New York performance artist Lucy Sexton. They have a daughter, Annabel, who's now 11.

"Why did you decide to get married?," I asked. "You could have lived together, perhaps."

"Health insurance," he replied. "I'm a gay man who married a best friend so we could have a child together and get decent health insurance."

"Not too romantic, Stephen," I suggested.

"It wasn't a romantic wedding. The source of the marriage itself wasn't romantic. It was practical."

It is most often said of the mercurial, driven Daldry that you can never pin him down, and it is true. He is both a renegade and an upstanding member of the cultural establishment, maverick and conformist, Cavalier and Roundhead. He's the man who produces the duck from the sousaphone! His life, he told me, is quite peripatetic. He spent a year in Brazil directing his last movie, *Trash,* a Portuguese children's adventure story set on a rubbish dump just outside Rio de Janeiro. Back in New York City, he's a director of the thrilling Pier 55 project on Manhattan's Lower West Side—a futuristic floating public park and amphitheater financed mostly by the Diller–von Furstenberg Family Foundation. Then again, he's to direct the Hollywood version of *Wicked,* while his West End revival of *The Audience* opens in London—this time with Kristin Scott Thomas playing the Queen of England, who is, when all's said and done, the longest-running act of them all.

"Thanks for the gorgeous lunch," Mr. Daldry said happily—and vanished from Frankie and Johnnie's. □

"WHAT DO YOU NEED MONEY FOR?"

GROOMING BY CANDICE FORNESS

PHOTOGRAPH BY GASPER TRINGALE



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JAMES WOLCOTT



SHOWS OF WEALTH *Clockwise from top left:* Taraji P. Henson in *Empire;* Emily VanCamp in *Revenge;* Lisa Rinna of *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills;* Larry Hagman as *Dallas*'s J. R. Ewing; Linda Evans, John Forsythe, and Joan Collins as *Dynasty*'s Carringtons; *Dallas*'s Southfork Ranch; Jim Backus as *Gilligan's Island*'s Thurston Howell III.

THE SEASON OF THE RICH

From *Gilligan's Island* to *Dallas* and *Dynasty* to the *Real Housewives* franchise, television has reflected America's changing view of the very rich. As a new Gilded Age gathers steam, this season's most sensational hit, *Empire,* underlines the cynicism surrounding the 1 percent

Mitt Romney's fateful decision this January not to pursue the presidency for a third futile time deprived those of us in the bleachers of a rare-ish opportunity to watch a representative of the 1 percent in plastic action. It is not often we get to study how a scion moves, behaves, and simulates reflective thought under changeable conditions, and to discover what pops out of such a prize specimen when he assumes the commoners aren't listening (as in Romney's notorious 47 percent talk to millionaire donors, captured on video by a heroic bartender). Forsaking the citizenry to remain among his own kind, Romney can now rejoin his comrades and breathe a sigh of relief. Like celebrities, the very rich feel most comfortable and kin with each other—fellow members of an exclusive club that converges upon Davos, Sun Valley, Dr. Doom's castle lair, and similar hierarchical retreats in an arrow swarm of private jets. "Let me tell you about the very rich. They are different from you and me," wrote F. Scott Fitzgerald in his story "The Rich Boy," to which Ernest Hemingway famously rejoined, "Yes, they have more money." Hemingway may have prided himself on one-upping the fallen-from-grace Fitzgerald, but in the Midas glow of this new Gilded Age the author of *The Great Gatsby* had it right. The very rich are different. They occupy a different altitude, harbor different expectations, play by different rules, take different vacations, and, apart from Warren Buffett, wouldn't be caught dead downing a McDonald's burger, despite their carnivorous natures. On television, the very rich are different from you and me, too, children of a greater god.

To be rich on prime-time TV is to expect unobstructed views as a birthright or part of the executive package, nothing tacky

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM PHOTOFEST (HENSON, RINNA, VANCAMP); FROM THE EVERETT COLLECTION (ALL OTHERS)



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violating the expensive vista as cocktails are sipped on a Hamptons patio overlooking the dunes (ABC's *Revenge*), a fixer broods over the latest body requiring disposal as he stares through the glass wall of some Hollywood louse's beach house (Showtime's *Ray Donovan*), or a samurai strike is concocted against a business rival in the gleaming war room 50 floors up as nobodies go about their ant business on the pavement below (USA Network's *Suits*). Evolving in sophistication to its current state of enlightened cynicism, TV pictures the very rich not as individual flukes lolling in the lap of luxury but as a tribal fiefdom in a gated community of the mind where outsiders are admitted only if they pass inspection and survive the elimination rounds, where a horsey laugh or a misused salad fork are the disqualifying marks of a peasant. Then back to the mud hut you go!

TO BE RICH ON TV IS TO EXPECT UNOBSTRUCTED VIEWS
AS A BIRTHRIGHT.

Wasn't always thus. In its infancy and through adolescence, TV peered at the rich through a cardboard periscope, relying on stereotypes left over from screwball comedies, paperback novels, and radio programs for its cathode-ray depictions. Rich folks in 50s and 60s series tended to be eccentrics, nonconformists, and similar fishtank exotics. Many of the men wore ascots, and the wives starchily comported themselves as if a ripple of pleasure would be a frightful bother. These privileged characters weren't stratospherically rich by today's plutocratic standards. Thurston Howell III with his wife, "Lovey," stranded with the rest of the shipwrecked misfits on *Gilligan's Island,* fussed about as a foppish caricature of a Yankee blueblood, affronted at the indignity of being surrounded by relative riffraff. He was a Harvard man, after all. (In one episode, Thurston and Lovey had to play butler and maid to a visiting Hollywood producer, a classic screwball switcheroo.) The Clampett family of *The Beverly Hillbillies* were backwoods innocents who, after striking oil at the old homestead, piled all their creaky furniture onto a rusty jalopy and traded in their Lincoln Log cabin for a pillared mansion with a *Gone with the Wind* staircase and a statuary-graced "cee-ment pond" (pool). Gene Barry's Amos Burke, of *Burke's Law,* was a millionaire playboy detective, the Hugh Hefner of homicide investigation, who was chauffeured to the crime scene in a Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud II. Such series were etherizers of pure escapism, rendering the rich as either goofily harmless or gallantly helpful, depending on their dime-thin characterizations.

It wasn't until the 70s and early 80s that the rich were portrayed as the striving, scheming, moneygrubbing, power-grabbing, backstabbing, boozing, whoring barons that so many Americans aspired to be, the billboard-size projections of our frontier psyche. (And even then the benign, indulgent image persisted in sitcoms such as *Silver Spoons* and *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*.) The Ewings of *Dallas* and the Carringtons of *Dynasty* were buccaneer-bold clans led by silver-maned patriarchs who had reaped their wealth the old-fashioned way, extracting it from Mother Earth and muscling out their rivals. The wealth of both *Dallas* and *Dynasty* was oil-based, as befitted the Age of Petroleum, when domestic oil rigs could be construed as virility symbols of independence once OPEC squeezed the manhood of the West with the oil embargo of 1973, during the Yom Kippur War. *Dallas,* with its Texas-size swagger and cowboy hats and boots, evoked the widescreen Hollywood melodramas of *Giant* and *Written on the Wind,* whose mansions seemed to moan with the ghosts of secrets that refused to rest, while its drawling manner prefigured the folksy pretenses of the Bush-family cartel as it took control. (The pre-eminent difference between Larry Hagman's wily, no-good J. R. Ewing and George W. Bush being that J.R. never acted as if his G.P.S. were guided by God.) For all its similar wheeling-dealings, *Dynasty* was more of a prime-time soap, and soap operas, no matter what power suits are placed at the head of the banquet table, are primarily female-driven jockeyings for the diamond crown—what one remembers most from *Dynasty* is not the ego wrestling for corporate dominance but the clash of the tigresses between Joan Collins's Alexis and Linda Evans's Krystle, climaxing in their catfight in the lily pond on April 13, 1983, a date that would live forever in the history of camp. This glossy legacy of manicured hand-to-hand combat lives on in reality-TV series showcasing the unreal "Real Housewives" of Beverly Hills, Orange County, New York City, New Jersey, Atlanta, D.C., and Miami, a cable franchise which eliminates needless fluff such as plot, trained actors, and finely etched dialogue to focus on the riveting essentials of psychodrama: jealousy, scorn, trash talk, and table-flipping, hair-pulling, face-scratching, champagne-flute-flying tantrums—Clare Boothe Luce's *The Women* rehatched as a weekly mosh pit. And then there are all those Kardashians, who keep popping out of the luxury clown car—if only *The Beverly Hillbillies* could be updated so that Kim K. and Elly May could do Rodeo Drive shopping together! That would be the ultimate in crossover TV.

Empire (Fox), the meteoric hit of the television season, the sort of popular sensation that has eluded the networks in recent years as the ball game has shifted to cable addictions (*Mad Men, Breaking Bad, Game of Thrones, True Detective,* and so forth), amalgamates all of the flamboyances of the filthy-rich genre and fires them out of a confetti cannon. Set in the never dull vice den of hip-hop music, it's a genre mash-up that whips the gangster saga, the *Dallas-Dynasty* family feud, the *Real Housewives* continuing catfight, and the racial-uplift inspirational into a new kind of dizzy exhilarant. Co-created by Lee Daniels, who showed in *The Butler* that he could ride the rim of melodrama and still keep things funky (Oprah doing her *Soul Train* electric boogaloo), *Empire* is a series that keeps going over the top, then goes over the top of that, leapfrogging over itself, constructing a narrative pyramid in which Terrence Howard, as the record-company mogul who makes Suge Knight look like a starter kit, enthrones himself in scene after scene like the last of the pharaohs, pitting son against son against son in the contest to become his worthy successor. Meanwhile, ex-wife Cookie, executed with diva bravura by Taraji P. Henson, upstages board meetings, video shoots, recording sessions, and family dinners, barging in like one of the heat-seeking molls on *Mob Wives,* unhelpfully referring to her husband's sleek new girlfriend, Anika, as a "bougie ho" and never letting him forget that his burgeoning empire was built on illegal-drug money—a threatful reminder, given that he's trying to take the company public on Wall Street. Everything that bombastically unwinds on *Empire* confirms the adage attributed to Balzac that behind every great fortune lies a great crime. Respectability flosses the very rich once the crime is buried so deep that there's no danger of its rising from the dead. At that point it's safe to run for office, pretending to be one of the people, or enter philanthropy, generously giving something back after all you've gorged. □

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CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW? OMG! Call me. Maybe? *Opposite,* Rosalind Russell and Cary Grant in an updated image from *His Girl Friday.*

GOOD-BYE TO "HELLO"

The phone call is dead. Long live the text? Examining the roles the telephone has played for generations—instrument of filial duty, amorous dalliance, dramatic revelation, and more—the author wonders how texting, with its primitive emotional vocabulary, will fill the void

By A. A. GILL

"Hello." "Who is this?" (Wary.) "It's me." "Dad?" (Even more wary.) "Yes, it's your father." "What's the matter?" (Panicked.) "Nothing, well, except—" "Oh God, it's Mom." (More panicked.) "No, your mom's fine, apart from—" "It's you. Where are you calling from?" (Suspicious panic.) "I'm trying to talk from home." "Is the dog O.K.?" (Forgetful panic.) "The dog died last year." "Oh, yeah. So, what happened?" (Irritated concern.) "Nothing, I just wanted to talk to you, see how you were." "Why didn't you just text? God, you frightened me." (Accusatory self-pity. Adrenaline withdrawal.) "Look, I'll text you later. Bye."

I still have a telephone with a curly cord on my desk. If it rings, and it does ring like an old telephone, it's either my mother or the *Vanity Fair* office to take copy. I'm the last hack in the

PHOTOGRAPHS: LEFT, © EMRE OGAN/ISTOCKPHOTO.COM (PHONE); RIGHT, © COLUMBIA PICTURES/PHOTOFEST

room who still dictates copy the way Cary Grant might have in *His Girl Friday.* Well, not actually like Cary Grant. But, as you read this, imagine me speaking it into the phone to a young woman with a nice New World voice whom I've never met and who's thinking, Why hasn't this Old World *Downton*-voiced Limey just pressed "Send" like everyone else who made it out of black and white?

Nobody talks on the telephone anymore. In a recent survey, respondents said that speaking into it was the sixth thing they did with their phone. This isn't going to be one of those eye-rolling, tooth-sucking, eyebrow-jerking general face-manipulating columns of nostalgia complaining about the new technology and slug-like geek kids with double opposable thumbs. Really, I like the future. I appreciate my automatic alarm-call necklace in case I get lost and confused in a mall. I appreciate the watch that tells the hospital my blood pressure's gone ballistic. I like my computer, just as long as it doesn't get ideas above its workstation. Actually, this is a bit of a nostalgia rant. We are coming to the end of the age of the telephone call and that may be a good or a bad thing, but it is a thing.

After inventing the telephone, Alexander Graham Bell came up with how to answer it. No one had ever answered a telephone before. They would brace themselves, pick it up, and look at it. He suggested that we confidently and clearly say "Ahoy!" because that's what you said aboard a ship. It didn't catch on. But it may be that the invention of a landlubber's Ahoy was more important than the instrument itself. It was the telephone conversation that really changed the way we lived. For more than a century, the telephone was the punctuation of life. The stage device that concerns love, or its passing, that was a Sunday filial duty, a confirmation of old friendships. A telephone call had gravitas, social importance; calls were memorable. You called because you had something to say and that became the stuff of drama. The phone was the great plot device of theater—it took the role that had been vacated by Shakespeare's missive-bearing messengers or the Greek chorus channeling fate and the gods—and even film and music: the fatal call; the kidnapper's call; the president's hotline; Glenn Miller's Pennsylvania 6-5000, the most famous phone number in all music; Dial "M" for murder; Blondie in the phone booth, the one across the hall.

In Richard Linklater's 1995 film, *Before Sunrise,* the two lovers, played by Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy, sit in a booth in a café sharing an imaginary phone conversation of charmed humor with a great deal of 18-karat sentiment and love. The ruse of the pretend phone call gives them a freedom and an inside-your-ear intimacy that even face-to-face doesn't provide. They're in love with each other, but they're also in love with being in love on the phone. I just watched the film again and I realized that no one is ever again going to make that pinkie-to-the-mouth thumb-to-the-ear sign across the room at me for "I'll call you." What are we going to do? Jab our fingers at each other?

Mourning the loss of the phone call is like pining for buggy driving or women in hats or three-martini lunches. They've gone. And that's how the culture works. And what about answering machines? Remember voice mail? No one speaks, so no one bothers leaving messages anymore. Now we're just all missed calls, like dead leaves on the lawn.

That same survey revealed that texting is the No. 1 function people use on their phones. This is the art of letter writing come back, they say. The literature you are always complaining that no one writes anymore, but now you're complaining that we don't talk anymore. You just like the contrarian grouching. And they have a point. But it's the wrong point. Texting isn't writing. It's not like letter writing. Texting is short script-writing. It's a collaborative soap opera where nothing happens. I say, you say. Which is why no one has discovered an elegant way of terminating a text. I've been trying to stifle a slow, lackluster, line-by-line conversation I've been having with a woman I met at dinner a year ago, simply because neither of us knows how to say, "This has gone on long enough and it's not going any further." There are no full stops in texting. You have dashes and to-be-continued dots and endless flaccid commas, but here's the thing: it's not really writing; it's not really a conversation. There's a name for what it is. It's phatic communion, communication without content.

There is no way to have profound or emotionally nuanced conversation by text. Imagine Doris Day texting Rock Hudson in *Pillow Talk,* or Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal in *When Harry Met Sally,* or Liam Neeson texting the bad guy in *Taken* ("IDK who u r. IDK wut u want . . . "). Imagine Cuba Gooding Jr. texting "Show me the $!!!"

This antiseptic chitchat is worsened by the embrace of the emoticon. These grins, winks, and dangling tongues are a lexicon of our cavemen ancestors and hieroglyphic stamps. Using emojis is the cave wall, the scratched sooty image before writing, an evolutionary step backward. □

IN A RECENT SURVEY, RESPONDENTS SAID THAT

SPEAKING INTO IT

WAS THE SIXTH THING THEY DID WITH THEIR PHONE.

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PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DARROW



LIPS BUTTONED *New York Times* reporter James Risen, caught up in a federal leak investigation, near his home, in Maryland.

THE MAN WHO KEPT THE SECRET

For seven years, *New York Times* reporter James Risen lived under the threat of jail for refusing to reveal a confidential source. When the government backed off, some saw a victory for freedom of the press. But Risen's battle shows how little that concept means in post-9/11 America

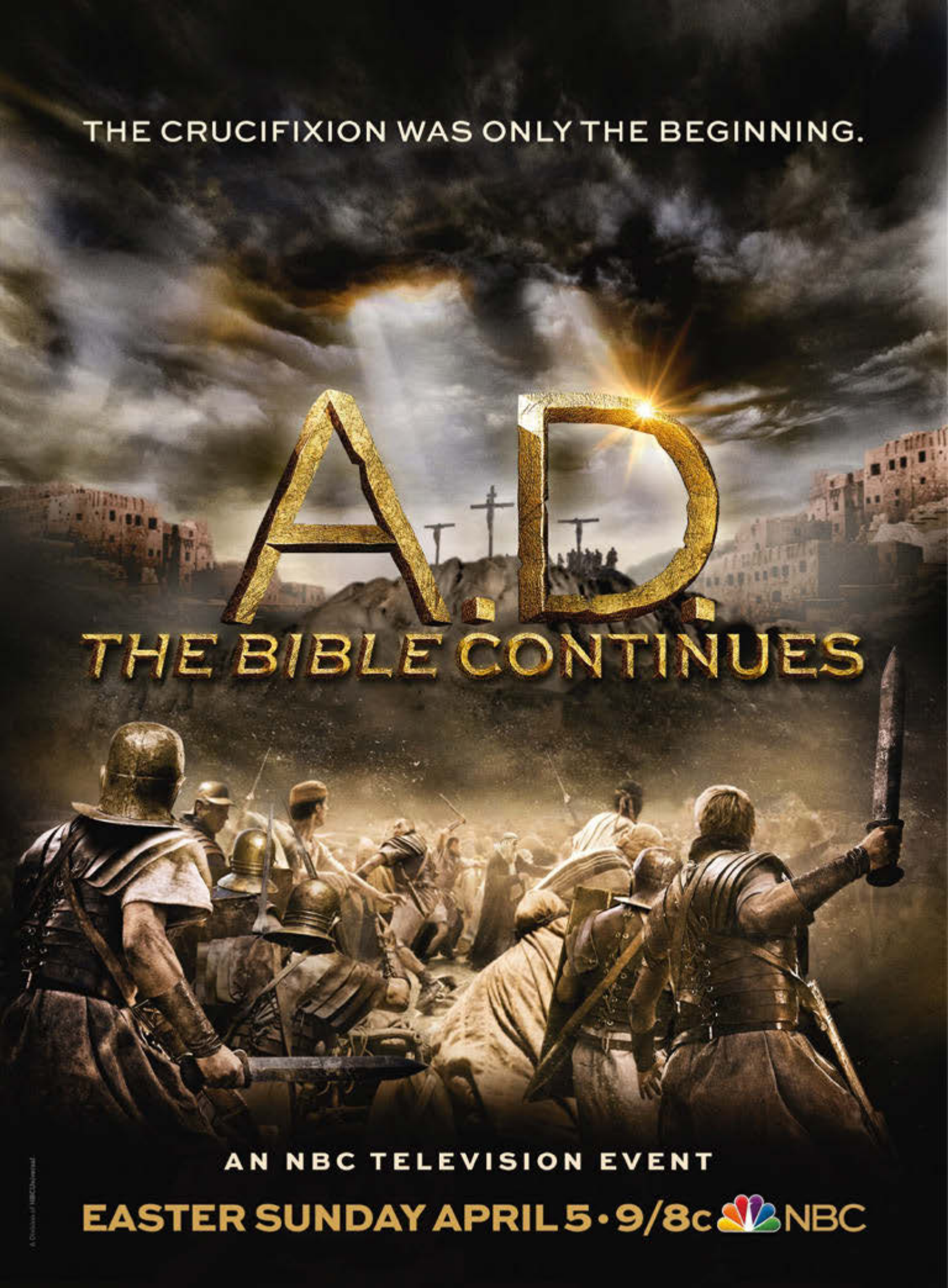
By SARAH ELLISON

Crackdown

On a January morning this year, James Risen wrapped his navy wool coat tight against the cold as he walked into the front entrance of the federal courthouse in Alexandria, Virginia. He had fought for more than seven years, and all the way to the Supreme Court, to avoid this moment. Now that the day had come, he was in fact early and sat alone on a bench in the vast hallway outside U.S. district-court judge Leonie Brinkema's courtroom. His lawyer Joel Kurtzberg ushered him inside.

A pre-trial hearing in the matter of *United States of America* v. *Jeffrey Alexander Sterling* was now in session. Noting that the government had subpoenaed Risen, Judge Brinkema asked him to take the stand shortly before 11 o'clock. He did so, sitting with an expression somewhere between hostility and boredom, his gaze fixed in front of him. The person nearest to Risen, other than the bailiff, was the defendant, Jeffrey Sterling, a former C.I.A. agent who faced 10 felony counts, including 7 under the Espionage Act, for allegedly leaking con-

PHOTOGRAPH BY GASPER TRINGALE


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fidential secrets to Risen for his 2006 book, *State of War.*

Sterling's case had been on hold for years, awaiting Risen's testimony—which Risen, a *New York Times* reporter, had fought to withhold, potentially on pain of imprisonment. The prosecutors thought they had won their battle after the Supreme Court, in June 2014, declined to consider Risen's appeal. But just weeks before this pre-trial hearing, they had seemingly been undercut by their boss, U.S. attorney general Eric Holder, who did not authorize them to ask Risen to identify confidential sources—a move that may not have been as conciliatory as it appears.

"ANYONE WHO KNEW RISEN WOULD TELL YOU THAT HE WAS PROBABLY **THE LAST PERSON ON THE PLANET** WHO WOULD TESTIFY."

But Assistant U.S. Attorney James Trump and the prosecution still wanted Risen to confirm some basic facts—facts they could methodically combine with other facts into a compelling circumstantial case. Trump asked Risen to confirm that he was the author of his own book, as well as of several articles that bore his byline. Risen responded with barely disguised disdain. Trump then asked Risen if he had any confidentiality agreements with his sources for a key chapter in *State of War.* Risen carefully repeated—nearly verbatim—what he had written in a 2011 affidavit, which was that he had used both identified sources and confidential sources for his reporting, period. Trump asked the question again, and Risen gave the same reply. After two more rounds of this, Trump allowed a long pause, and then testily asked, "Do you understand the question I'm asking you, sir?" Risen replied, "I do." Then he repeated his answer. Judge Brinkema broke in and told Risen, "It's a simple question"—either he had confidentiality agreements with his sources or he didn't. Risen didn't budge. "That's not my interpretation of the question," he said. "I don't want to provide information to help the government create a mosaic to establish certain facts in this case."

In narrow terms, the trial centered on Sterling. But Risen regards the government's pursuit of his own testimony as punishment for his coverage of policies that have defined the country since the September 11 terrorist attacks. Risen has much journalistic company. In recent years, the news pages have not been filled with stories about prison time for the architects of the 2008 financial meltdown. But journalists as a group have been pursued as never before. The track record of the Obama administration—which has invoked the rarely utilized 1917 Espionage Act, enacted during World War I to deal with spies, to prosecute current and former government employees for sharing information with the press—is a surprising one for a team that in its early days promised increased openness and stronger protections for whistle-blowers.

In May 2013, Obama's Justice Department informed the Associated Press that it had, over a period of two months, seized records for more than 20 phone lines associated with the agency's staff. Soon after, it seized phone records and e-mails between a Fox News reporter and a State Department contractor. It has investigated the relationship between multiple *New York Times* and *Washington Post* reporters and their government sources. President Obama said that he was "troubled" by the impact his administration's leak prosecutions could have on the press, and in response the Justice Department recently revised its policies on how it obtains information from reporters. The revisions raise the bar that investigators must clear to seize a journalist's records in some cases. But there are gaping loopholes that leave journalists and their sources vulnerable. Meanwhile, the leak investigations continue across the country. In late 2014, Eric Holder, the outgoing U.S. attorney general, signed off on a subpoena request for a *60 Minutes* producer, only to pull back upon learning that the producer planned to resist.

The cases cited above are some of the most high profile—others are doubtless under way but remain secret—and also don't include cases at the state level or those involving independent writers and activists. In that category, Barrett Brown, an author and freelance journalist who reported frequently on the hacker collective Anonymous, was in January 2015 sentenced to 63 months in prison after admitting to threatening an F.B.I. agent and linking to information hacked by Anonymous. The cases have occurred as the government confronts "mega-leaks" of classified information—by the organization WikiLeaks and by N.S.A. contractor Edward Snowden. Journalists such as the independent filmmaker Laura Poitras, who reported on WikiLeaks and the Snowden documents, and David Miranda, who transported information related to the Snowden material, have undergone border harassment at the hands of both U.S. and British authorities.

Since 2009, six current or former government employees and two government contractors have been indicted or prosecuted under the Espionage Act for leaking information to the public. There were only three such prosecutions under all previous U.S. presidents combined since 1917.

Several former Justice Department lawyers and other administration officials say that there has been no deliberate crackdown on leakers and no specific intention of targeting journalists. As they explain it, the increased focus on journalists and their sources is simple mathematics. These days, there is an unprecedented amount of classified information in government vaults; leaks are inevitably more frequent—and so, therefore, are prosecutions. Moreover, because the information is often digital, the pathways are easier to track and cases are easier to build. Risen, government officials say, was swept up in this dynamic, but there was no particular campaign against reporters. Risen himself believes otherwise. Shortly after Dennis C. Blair was appointed as the director of national intelligence, in 2009, he asked for a list of government officials who had been prosecuted for leaking classified government information. While there had been 153 cases referred to the Justice Department in the previous four years, not a single referral had led to an indictment. That meager tally, according to Mr. Blair's comments to *The New York Times* in 2013, "was pretty shocking to all of us." He went on to describe a series of meetings and phone calls with Attorney General Holder in which they fashioned a more aggressive strategy to punish leaks. "My background is in the Navy," Blair was quoted as saying, "and it is good to hang an admiral once in a while as an example to the others."

Whatever the government's motivation, seeking Risen's cooperation was a fool's errand. "Most reporters wouldn't testify, but anyone who knew Risen would tell you that he was probably the last reporter on the planet who would testify," Matthew Miller, a former Justice Department spokesman who worked under Eric Holder, told me.

"This Was a Screwup"

James Risen was raised in Washington, D.C., the youngest of four children in a working-class Catholic family. As a student at Brown, Risen worked for *The Brown Daily Herald* and was also the campus stringer for the *Providence Journal.* After college he went to Medill School of Journalism, where he met his future wife, Penny Blank. Risen held a variety of newspaper jobs before joining the *Los Angeles Times* in the mid-1980s. He moved to Washington in 1990 and by 1995 was covering the C.I.A. In 1998 he

was hired by *The New York Times.* Today, he lives about an hour outside of Washington, D.C., in Gaithersburg, Maryland. His three sons are grown, and Penny works at a local Lutheran church, helping with community outreach and social media.

Ironically, as Risen recalled when I met with him recently, his first big reporting project at the *Times* was "not skeptical enough" of the government's stance. It was a series of stories in 1999, written with investigative reporter Jeff Gerth, about a potential security breach at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. The government's prime suspect was a man named Wen Ho Lee, a Taiwan-born American nuclear scientist, and the case against him was built very publicly through a series of government leaks to the *Times* and other organizations. Lee was eventually charged with passing nuclear secrets to China. He was denied bail and held in solitary confinement for 278 days. But, it turned out, the evidence didn't fully support the charges against Lee. (The source of the breach was never identified. Lee ultimately pleaded guilty to one count of illegally gathering and retaining national-security information.) President Bill Clinton told reporters he was "quite troubled" by the government's treatment of Lee, and the *Times* ran an unusual letter to readers that came across partly as an apology. Lee later sued the government and the five main news organizations that covered the story. In 2006, the news organizations paid $750,000 of a total $1.6 million settlement with Lee. The government contributed the rest.

The episode brought heavy criticism to Risen, Gerth, and the *Times,* and it deepened Risen's suspicions about "official" Washington. He displayed some of that newfound skepticism when approaching the terrorism threat after September 11. Don Van Natta Jr., then a reporter for the *Times,* now at ESPN, recalled being in a meeting with Risen during the first days after the attacks. "This was a screwup," Van Natta remembered Risen saying, "and we should be reporting on how the intelligence community screwed it up." (Risen says he doesn't recall this conversation.) Jill Abramson, the paper's Washington-bureau chief, asked Risen, Van Natta, and other reporters, including Judith Miller, to look into the intelligence failures around 9/11 as well as the rise of the terrorist group al-Qaeda. The reporters went on to win the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for explanatory reporting.

In March 2002, Risen published a story that, in time, would alter his life. Risen's article concerned a black former C.I.A. officer, Jeffrey Sterling, who had been fired in January of that year, and who was suing the agency for racial discrimination. The lawsuit was ultimately dismissed, and the story did not attract much attention outside intelligence circles. At the moment, the world was more focused on the calculated Bush-administration leaks about alleged weapons of mass destruction in the hands of Saddam Hussein.

In the run-up to the invasion of Iraq, Risen wrote stories that cast doubt, correctly, on the existence of Saddam's W.M.D. But such articles were often held or buried deep inside the paper. Abramson told me about one story by Risen, involving an intelligence analyst who doubted that Iraq possessed any weapons of mass destruction. The story sat around for weeks, she remembered, and then a very similar story ran in *The Washington Post,* written by the veteran national-security reporter Walter Pincus. "I raised Cain, and they ran it but buried it," Abramson said, speaking of the paper's editors. Referring to Risen, she went on, "I know that, as mad as I was, he was probably there with steam coming out of his ears."

STATE OF WAR WAS PUBLISHED IN JANUARY 2006. SHORTLY AFTERWARD, THE GOVERNMENT OPENED MULTIPLE LEAK INVESTIGATIONS.

Operation Merlin

Risen was indeed furious, but he was soon onto another story, this one about a failed C.I.A. effort to thwart Iran's nuclear ambitions, code-named Operation Merlin. In a nutshell, the story was this: at the behest of U.S. intelligence, a Russian defector and scientist had given the Iranians flawed blueprints for components of a nuclear warhead. The U.S. government would later allege that this story was based on classified information provided to Risen by Jeffrey Sterling. As Risen tried to get the Merlin story into the paper, the *Times* engaged in a series of tense meetings with Bush-administration officials. In May of 2003, during a personal meeting, National-Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice told Risen and Abramson that it ought to be "unthinkable" for the *Times* to publish the story, adding that it could easily lead to the death of an American citizen and could conceivably contribute to the deaths of millions of innocent victims. After the meeting, Risen and Abramson agreed that Risen would "carefully continue to report" the story, Abramson recalled. Risen did, but perhaps not carefully enough—Rice seemed to be aware of his efforts and before long summoned Abramson alone for another meeting. The Operation Merlin story was put on hold. "I feel bad in retrospect that I wasn't focused on Jim's story, or interested in it," Abramson explained. "He felt upset with me, justifiably." At the time, Abramson and virtu-



THE TARGET *Left,* former C.I.A. officer Jeffrey Sterling after his conviction, in January. *Right,* a 2002 story by Risen about Sterling.

PHOTOGRAPH, LEFT, BY KEVIN WOLF/A.P. IMAGES

Fired by C.I.A., He Say
Agency Practiced Bias

First Discrimination Suit by a Black Of

By JAMES RISEN

WASHINGTON, March 1 — As a young case officer at the Central Intelligence Agency, Jeffrey Sterling says, he was eager to begin his first overseas posting, in Bonn, and he relished his secret assignment to recruit Iranians as spies.

After long hours spent on the Iranian desk at C.I.A. headquarters and nearly a year in language school learning Farsi, he felt that he was ready to put his training to use.

But after waiting two months for orders that never arrived, he said, he pressed a determination to more diverse, white men ha dominated its top manag Since the agency started i every director, deputy direct chief of espionage operatio been a white man.

In the mid-1990's, the white control over espionage faced it major legal challenge from a action suit by a group of wome were case officers and who cha sexual discrimination. The w won a $990,000 settlement in fe court in 1995.

Mr. Sterling also said he beli


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ally everyone else at the paper were focused on a very different story, the one happening inside the newsroom: Jayson Blair, a young reporter for the *Times,* had just been exposed as a serial plagiarist and fabricator.

After the Operation Merlin story was finally killed, Risen and his colleague Eric Lichtblau uncovered another explosive development, about how the U.S. government was engaging in wiretaps of American citizens without securing the warrants required by law. The story was ready to run just before the presidential election of 2004. Risen described to me a call he had with the director of the National Security Agency, Michael Hayden. After reading Hayden the lead of the story, Risen said, "I heard this sharp intake of breath."

That call resulted in a major confrontation between *Times* editors and Bush-administration officials. The editors were told that if the paper ran the story and the U.S. suffered another terrorist attack the administration would hold the *Times* partly responsible. Deferring to the White House, the editors elected not to run the story, at least not immediately. After the election, Risen and Lichtblau pushed again to publish the revelations but were unsuccessful. "I was furious," Risen told me, and he embarked on the book leave that would yield *State of War.* He was determined that what he had uncovered about an illegal government program would somehow see the light of day.

What followed was "the most traumatic, intense period of my life," Risen recalled. "It nearly killed me." By putting the warrantless-wiretapping story in his book, "I knew I was endangering my career at the *Times* and also taking on the Bush administration." Not until the summer of 2005 did he tell *Times* editors that the story they had sat on would be included in *State of War.* "They were furious. They thought I was being insubordinate, which I was." The *Times* now faced a choice: let itself be scooped by its own reporter or finally run the story—which is the course it chose. Before publication, Arthur Sulzberger Jr., the newspaper's publisher, and Bill Keller, the executive editor, met in the Oval Office with President Bush and Hayden. In that meeting, after a joke by Sulzberger that failed to amuse the president ("We have something in common," he said to Bush. "We both work in our fathers' offices"), the men engaged in a tense discussion. The administration warned the paper that if it ran the story on warrantless wiretapping "we could have blood on our hands," Keller remembered. The *Times* ran the story anyway, in December, and the revelations prompted a public outcry and several congressional investigations.

State of War was published a few weeks later, in January 2006. Shortly afterward, the government opened multiple leak investigations. One was into the *Times*'s story on warrantless wiretapping. Another was into the chapter of Risen's book about Operation Merlin.

A PERUSAL OF COURT FILINGS REVEALS

HOW MUCH THE GOVERNMENT HAS IN ITS POSSESSION WITHOUT RISEN'S EVER OPENING HIS MOUTH.

Privilege? What Privilege?

These investigations are part of a swelling wave of actions in which the government set out to deal with leaks by going after not only the leakers but also the reporters it believes have received information from leakers. The effort had its roots in the Bush administration, but it has accelerated under Obama.

In May 2013, the Associated Press announced that telephone records for more than 20 phone lines of its staff during a two-month period had been seized without the A.P.'s knowledge by the Justice Department. The precipitating event was thought to be a 2012 story, by Matt Apuzzo and Adam Goldman, about a C.I.A. operation that thwarted a plot by Yemeni terrorists to detonate a bomb on an airplane. The government sought to identify the source of the information.

Also that month, *The Washington Post* broke a story about Fox News reporter James Rosen, who had been named in an affidavit for a search warrant in May 2010 as a possible criminal "co-conspirator" for his role in publishing national-security information. His offense was a story he reported in 2009 regarding a planned nuclear test by North Korea. That co-conspirator label helped prosecutors avoid the bureaucratic requirements of a subpoena, because the Privacy Protection Act allows the search of a reporter's material if the reporter is directly implicated in a crime. The Justice Department was able to obtain a vast array of information about Rosen's conversations and e-mails. A State Department security adviser, Stephen Kim, Rosen's suspected source, was indicted for giving information to Rosen and is now in prison serving a 13-month sentence.

In May 2014, Mike Levine, a former Fox reporter and producer, now at ABC News, wrote an article revealing that he had been subpoenaed three years earlier over a story about Somali-American men, living in Minneapolis, who had been allegedly recruited to fight for an Islamic extremist group in Somalia. In that story, he reported that the men had been indicted on terrorism-related charges by a federal grand jury, although this information was still under seal. The F.B.I. opened an inquiry. In his article about the subpoena (which was eventually dropped), Levine wrote that "professional and personal life under the threat of jail for 16 subsequent months is best captured in a note I wrote to myself at the time: 'I've felt like throwing up all day so far.'"

The Supreme Court has ruled only once, in the 1972 case of *Branzburg* v. *Hayes,* on whether journalists can be forced to testify about confidential sources. *Branzburg* involved three different journalists who had witnessed potentially illegal activity and who all resisted testifying before grand juries about what they had seen. In that case, the Supreme Court ruled five to four that the press clause of the First Amendment—namely, that "Congress shall make no law" abridging freedom of the press—did not exempt reporters from testifying under grand-jury subpoenas about their sources in court. However, one of the judges in the majority, Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr., wrote in a separate opinion that, while he agreed there should be no constitutional protection for journalists and their sources, the courts must strike the "proper balance between freedom of the press and the obligation of all citizens to give relevant testimony with respect to criminal conduct." Elaborating later in notes, he invoked an "evidentiary" privilege for reporters and sources, much like that which exists between lawyers and clients, doctors and patients, husbands and wives. Currently, 49 states and Washington, D.C., have established a qualified privilege for the relationship. No federal shield law exists protecting reporters, though federal courts have occasionally recognized a limited privilege.

Until recently, the government and the press relied on a kind of tacit agreement in which the government largely stayed away from reporters' records, information, and testimony. In exchange, reporters negotiated with the government when dealing with stories of a sensitive national-security nature. Prosecutors argue that subpoenaing a reporter is a bureaucratic slog—"a pain in the ass," a former Obama-administration official explained—and for that reason there's no great incentive to do it. So why, then, are journalists such as Risen landing so often in the Justice Department's crosshairs?

Part of the explanation, as noted above, may be the sheer volume of leaking that has occurred. But there are other reasons. First, going after reporters is no longer taboo. The

big shift came with the investigation in 2003 of I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, Vice President Richard Cheney's chief of staff. Libby had allegedly leaked to several reporters, including Judith Miller, of *The New York Times,* the identity of a covert C.I.A. agent, Valerie Plame. Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald subpoenaed Miller in 2004, and she spent 85 days in jail before Libby released her from a pledge of confidentiality. "Pat Fitzgerald was the one who changed the game," Sam Buell, a former Department of Justice prosecutor and now a professor at Duke University's law school, told me. Fitzgerald's freedom to pursue reporters derived to some degree from his quasi-independent mandate. "He had been appointed by Washington and given independent authority," Buell said. "He didn't have to go up the chain for everything he was doing."

Second, while prosecutors may be reluctant to seek actual subpoenas for testimony by reporters, subpoenas are becoming less and less important. What the Justice Department is doing these days, said Lucy Dalglish, dean of the Philip Merrill College of Journalism, at the University of Maryland, and former executive director of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, "is more insidious than that." Instead of issuing subpoenas, prosecutors are increasingly executing search warrants or other court orders for reporters' material or for information held by others. Because so much information is digital, it is easy to retrieve—sometimes with no one's knowledge. This capability could soon make obsolete the need for a reporter's personal testimony.

Third, there's the power of inertia. Cases that started during the Bush administration are handled by career prosecutors, not political appointees, and the cases accumulate from one administration to another, because that's the way the system is set up. No one wants to live under a legal regime where the pursuit of justice can be switched on and off by the election results.

Finally, there's the tenor of the times. Federal legislation does not directly prohibit the press from publishing government secrets, and the Supreme Court decided in 1931, in *Near* v. *Minnesota,* that "prior restraint" of publication is a violation of the First Amendment. But the court's decision also stated that when a nation is at war many things that could be said in times of peace "will not be endured." The war we have declared on terrorism was set up in such a way as to have no end.

Brushback Pitch

One of the stranger things about James Risen's life during the past seven years—ever since the government served notice that it was conducting a criminal investigation into *State of War* for "unauthorized disclosure of classified information"—has been that the threat of jail, while initially paralyzing, eventually became so constant that it faded, as he told me, into "background noise."

Risen's lawyers moved to quash the original 2008 subpoena, but it expired before the issue could be decided. The Justice Department, under Eric Holder, renewed the subpoena in 2010. Risen filed a lengthy and detailed response in 2011. In response to yet another subpoena, in 2013 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit ruled that Risen would have to testify. Risen appealed the decision up to the Supreme Court. Days before the Supreme Court began discussing the case, Attorney General Holder told a group of reporters that "as long as I'm attorney general, no reporter who is doing his job is going to go to jail." The comment seemed outwardly to be in support of journalists but was interpreted by many as a signal to the court: you can support the administration in principle without worrying that Risen will be punished. The court turned down Risen's appeal in June 2014.

Throughout, the government has demonstrated strong circumstantial evidence linking Risen and Sterling—gathered from authorized searches, not from any reporter's testimony—leading some legal analysts to wonder why prosecutors were pursuing Risen at all. Government prosecutors have obtained Risen's phone records, e-mail records, credit reports, credit-card and bank records, and records of his airline travel. The government has even obtained Western Union transfers from Risen to at least one of his children. In addition to revealing copious amounts of personal information, these records paint a precise picture of Sterling's alleged interactions with Risen, who was identified as "Author A" in the original indictment. A perusal of the court filings reveals how much the government has in its possession without Risen's ever opening his mouth. For instance, the government has an e-mail from Risen to Sterling sent shortly after the Operation Merlin story was killed: "I'm sorry if I failed you so far but I really enjoy talking to you and would like to continue."

Risen believes that the legal pursuit of his testimony has been, in fact, personal, and amounts to a brushback pitch—a pitch thrown threateningly inside, to move a batter away from the plate. He refers to the legal process as "this cold machine." The machine at last ground to a halt shortly after January's pre-trial hearing, when prosecutors filed a motion to exclude Risen as a witness. He was out of the case entirely. The outcome was a victory of sorts for Risen, but it will not undo what he has gone through. Nor is it likely to be a comfort to any reporters or potential sources who have seen Risen's e-mails and telephone records so easily exposed to public view, seen his friends and colleagues questioned by the F.B.I., or seen how nervous newspapers have become in confrontations with the government. His resistance didn't save his alleged source, Sterling, who was found guilty in January of nine felony counts related to leaking national-security information, and who is awaiting sentencing. That the government may no longer need the testimony of reporters such as Risen to make its case—because its search-and-seizure power enables an evidentiary end run—is even more disturbing. It means that "reportorial privilege" would be irrelevant even if it truly existed: the government can find what it wants anyway. Eric Holder is said to have been stung by the criticism of his multiple leak investigations, and he recently said that he regrets throwing the "co-conspirator" label at James Rosen. His regret may be sincere, but reporters and editors are looking over their shoulders more warily than ever before. That is because they need to. □

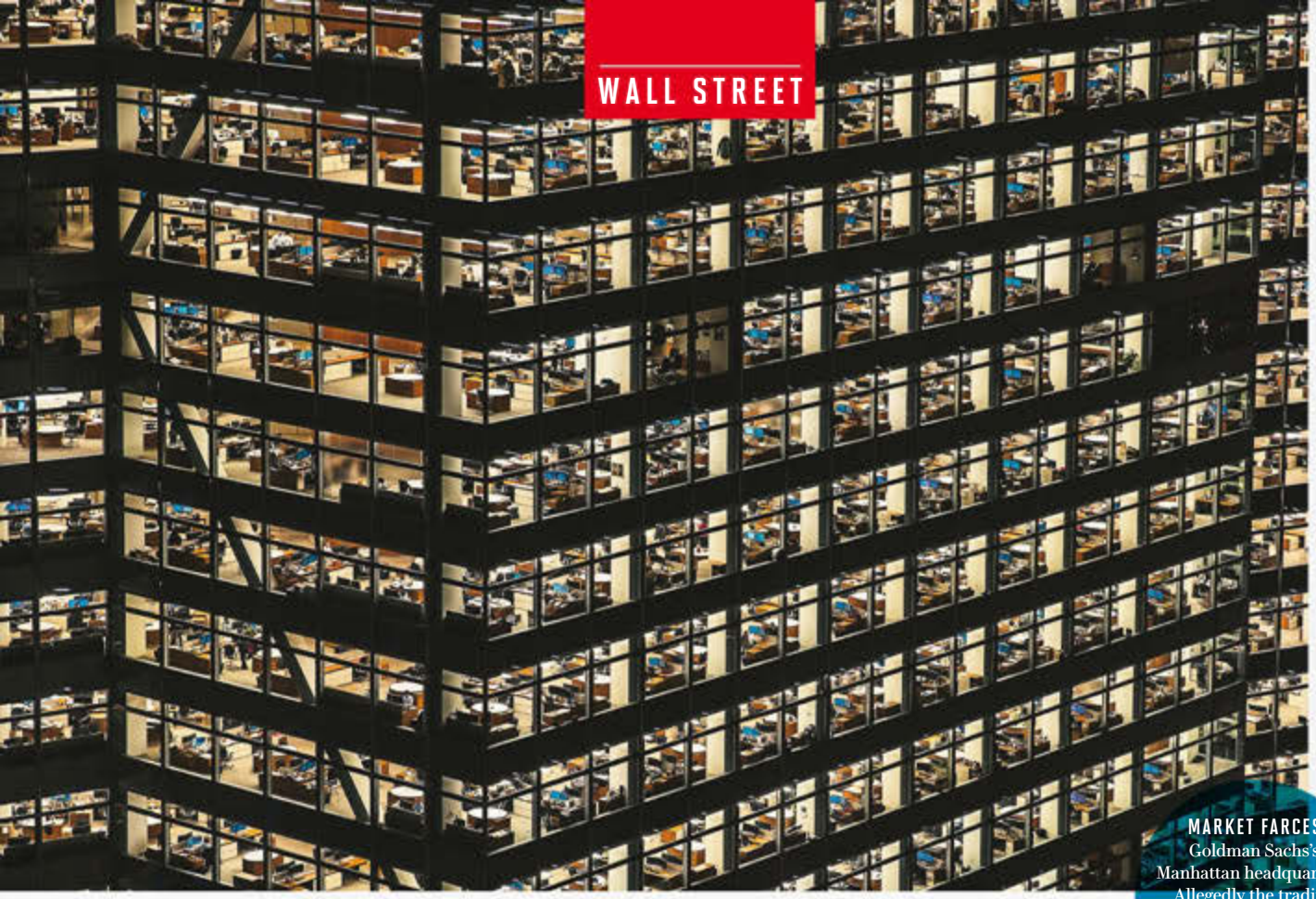
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MARKET FARCES Goldman Sachs's Manhattan headquarters. Allegedly the trading floor "stopped dead" to watch a CNBC debate on high-frequency trading.

WALL STREET'S *FLASH* MOB

Flash Boys, the author's best-selling exposé of high-speed trading, has jeopardized a multi-billion-dollar slice of the market, making some of Wall Street's richest people very angry. Dissecting the reaction, he argues that the furor has obscured his book's real news

By MICHAEL LEWIS

When I sat down to write *Flash Boys,* in 2013, I didn't intend to see just how angry I could make the richest people on Wall Street. I was far more interested in the characters and the situation in which they found themselves. Led by an obscure 35-year-old trader at the Royal Bank of Canada named Brad Katsuyama, they were all well-regarded professionals in the U.S. stock market. The situation was that they no longer understood that market. And their ignorance was forgivable. It would have been difficult to find anyone, circa 2009, able to give you an honest account of the inner workings of the American stock market—by then fully automated, spectacularly fragmented, and complicated beyond belief by possibly well-intentioned regulators and less well-intentioned insiders. That the American stock market had become a mystery struck me as interesting. How does that happen? And who benefits?

By the time I met my characters they'd already spent several years trying to answer those questions. In the end they figured out that the complexity, though it may have arisen innocently enough, served the interest of financial intermediaries rather than the investors and corporations the market is meant to serve. It had enabled a massive amount of predatory trading and had insti-

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tutionalized a systemic and totally unnecessary unfairness in the market and, in the bargain, rendered it less stable and more prone to flash crashes and outages and other unhappy events. Having understood the problems, Katsuyama and his colleagues had set out not to exploit them but to repair them. That, too, I thought was interesting: some people on Wall Street wanted to fix something, even if it meant less money for Wall Street, and for them personally.

Of course, by trying to fix the stock market they also threatened the profits of the people who were busy exploiting its willful inefficiencies. Here is where it became inevitable that *Flash Boys* would seriously piss off a few important people: anyone in an established industry who stands up and says "The way things are being done here is totally insane; here is why it is insane; and here is a better way to do them" is bound to incur the wrath of established insiders, who now stand accused of creating the insanity. The closest thing in my writing life to the response of Wall Street to Brad Katsuyama was the response of Major League Baseball to Billy Beane after *Moneyball* was published, in 2003, and it became clear that Beane had made his industry look foolish. But the *Moneyball* story put in jeopardy only the jobs and prestige of the baseball establishment. The *Flash Boys* story put in jeopardy billions of dollars of Wall Street profits and a way of financial life.

Two weeks before the book's publication, Eric Schneiderman, the New York attorney general, announced an investigation into the relationship between high-frequency traders, who trade with computer algorithms at nearly light speed, and the 60 or so public and private stock exchanges in the United States. In the days after *Flash Boys* came out, the Justice Department announced its own investigation, and it was reported that the F.B.I. had another. The S.E.C., responsible in the first place for the market rules, known as Reg NMS, that led to the mess, remained fairly quiet, though its enforcement director let it be known that the commission was investigating exactly what unseemly advantages high-frequency traders were getting for their money when they paid retail brokers like Schwab and TD Ameritrade for the right to execute the stock-market orders of small investors. (Good question!) The initial explosion was soon followed by a steady fallout of fines and lawsuits and complaints, which, I assume, has really only just begun. The Financial Industry Regulatory Authority announced it had opened 170 cases into "abusive algorithms," and also filed a complaint against a brokerage firm called Wedbush Securities for allowing its high-frequency-trading customers from January 2008 through August 2013 "to flood U.S. exchanges with thousands of potentially manipulative wash trades and other potentially manipulative trades, including manipulative layering and spoofing." (In a "wash trade," a trader acts as both buyer and seller of a stock, to create the illusion of volume. "Layering" and "spoofing" are off-market orders designed to trick the rest of the market into thinking there are buyers or sellers of a stock waiting in the wings, in an attempt to nudge the stock price one way or the other.) In 2009, Wedbush traded on average 13 percent of all shares on NASDAQ. The S.E.C. eventually fined the firm for the violations, and Wedbush admitted wrongdoing. The S.E.C. also fined a high-frequency-trading firm called Athena Capital Research for using "a sophisticated algorithm" by which "Athena manipulated the closing prices of thousands of NASDAQ-listed stocks over a six-month period" (an offense which, if committed by human beings on a trading floor instead of by computers in a data center, would have gotten those human beings banned from the industry, at the very least).

On it went. The well-named BATS group, the second-largest stock-exchange operator in the U.S., with more than 20 percent of the total market, paid a fine to settle another S.E.C. charge, that two of its exchanges had created order types (i.e., instructions that accompany a stock-market order) for high-frequency traders without informing ordinary investors. The S.E.C. charged the Swiss bank UBS with creating illegal, secret order types for high-frequency traders so they might more easily exploit investors inside the UBS dark pool—the private stock market run by UBS. Schneiderman filed an even more shocking lawsuit against Barclays, charging the bank with lying to investors about the presence of high-frequency traders in its dark pool, to make it easier for the high-frequency traders to have the pleasure of trading against the investors. Somewhere in the middle of it all a lawyer—oddly, named Michael Lewis—who had devised the successful legal strategy for going after Big Tobacco, helped file a class-action suit on behalf of investors against the 13 public U.S. stock exchanges, accusing them of, among other things, cheating ordinary investors by selling special access to high-frequency traders. One big bank, Bank of America, shuttered its high-frequency-trading operation, and two others, Citigroup and Wells Fargo, closed their dark pools. Norway's sovereign-wealth fund, the world's largest, announced that it would do what it needed to avoid high-frequency traders. One enterprising U.S. brokerage firm, Interactive Brokers, announced that, unlike its competitors, it did not sell retail stock-market orders to high-frequency traders, and even installed a button that enabled investors to route their orders directly to IEX, a new alternative stock exchange opened in October 2013 by Brad Katsuyama and his team, which uses technology to block predatory high-frequency traders from getting the millisecond advantages they need.

On October 15, 2014, in a related development, there was a flash crash in the market for U.S. Treasury bonds. All of a sudden the structure of the U.S. stock market, which had been aped by other markets, seemed to implicate more than just the market for U.S. stocks.

In the past 11 months, the U.S. stock market has been as chaotic as a Cambodian construction site. At times the noise has sounded like preparations for the demolition of a hazardous building. At other times it has sounded like a desperate bid by a slumlord to gussy the place up to distract inspectors. In any case, the slumlords seem to realize that doing nothing is no longer an option: too many people are too upset. Brad Katsuyama explained to the world what he and his team had learned about the inner workings of the stock market. The nation of investors was appalled—a poll of institutional investors in late April 2014, conducted by the brokerage firm ConvergEx, discovered that 70 percent of them thought that the U.S. stock market was unfair and 51 percent considered high-frequency trading "harmful" or "very harmful." And the complaining investors were the big guys, the mutual funds and pension funds and hedge funds you might think could defend themselves in the market. One can only imagine how the little guy felt. The authorities evidently saw the need to leap into action, or to appear to.

THE RIGGING OF THE STOCK MARKET CANNOT BE DISMISSED AS A **DISPUTE BETWEEN RICH HEDGE-FUND** GUYS AND CLEVER TECHIES.

The narrow slice of the financial sector that makes money off the situation that *Flash Boys* describes felt the need to shape the public perception of it. It took them a while to figure out how to do this well. On


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TICKER-TAPE CHARADE One fund manager calculated that trading on U.S. stock exchanges other than IEX amounted to a $240 million tax a year on his fund.

the book's publication day, for instance, an analyst inside a big bank circulated an idiotic memo to clients that claimed I had "an undisclosed stake in IEX." (I've never had a stake in IEX.) Then came an unfortunate episode on CNBC, during which Brad Katsuyama was verbally assaulted by the president of the BATS exchange, who wanted the audience to believe that Katsuyama had dug up dirt on the other stock exchanges simply to promote his own, and that he should feel ashamed. He hollered and ranted and waved and in general made such an unusual public display of his inner life that half of Wall Street came to a halt, transfixed. I was told by a CNBC producer that it was the most watched segment in the channel's history, and while I have no idea if that's true, or how anyone would even know, it might as well be. A boss on the Goldman Sachs trading floor told me the place stopped dead to watch it. An older guy next to him pointed to the TV screen and asked, "So the angry guy, is it true we own a piece of his exchange?" (Goldman Sachs indeed owned a piece of the BATS exchange.) "And the little guy, we don't own a piece of his exchange?" (Goldman Sachs does not own a piece of IEX.) The old guy thought about it a minute, then said, "We're fucked."

Thinking, Fast and Slow

That feeling was eventually shared by the BATS president. His defining moment came when Katsuyama asked him a simple question: Did BATS sell a faster picture of the stock market to high-frequency traders while using a slower picture to price the trades of investors? That is, did it allow high-frequency traders, who knew current market prices, to trade unfairly against investors at old prices? The BATS president said it didn't, which surprised me. On the other hand, he didn't look happy to have been asked. Two days later it was clear why: it wasn't true. The New York attorney general had called the BATS exchange to let them know it was a problem when its president went on TV and got it wrong about this very important aspect of its business. BATS issued a correction and, four months later, parted ways with its president.

From that moment, no one who makes his living off the dysfunction in the U.S. stock market has wanted any part of a public discussion with Brad Katsuyama. Invited in June 2014 to testify at a U.S. Senate hearing on high-frequency trading, Katsuyama was surprised to find a complete absence of high-frequency traders. (CNBC's Eamon Javers reported that the Senate subcommittee had invited a number of them to testify, and all had declined.) Instead they held their own roundtable discussion in Washington, led by a New Jersey congressman, Scott Garrett, to which Brad Katsuyama was not invited. For the past 11 months, that's been the pattern: the industry has spent time and money creating a smoke machine about the contents of *Flash Boys* but is unwilling to take on directly the people who supplied those contents.

On the other hand, it took only a few weeks for a consortium of high-frequency traders to marshal an army of lobbyists and publicists to make their case for them. These condottieri set about erecting lines of defense for their patrons. Here was the first: the only people who suffer from high-frequency traders are even richer hedge-fund managers, when their large stock-market orders are detected and front-run. It has nothing to do with ordinary Americans.

Which is such a weird thing to say that you have to wonder what is going through the mind of anyone who says it. It's true that among the early financial backers of Katsuyama's IEX were three of the world's most famous hedge-fund managers—Bill Ackman, David Einhorn, and Daniel Loeb—who understood that their stock-market orders were being detected and front-run by high-frequency traders. But rich hedge-fund managers aren't the only investors who submit large orders to the stock market that can be detected and front-run by high-frequency traders. Mutual funds and pension funds and university endowments also submit large stock-market orders, and these, too, can be detected and front-run by high-frequency traders. The vast majority of American middle-class savings are managed by such institutions.

The effect of the existing system on these savings is not trivial. In early 2015, one of America's largest fund managers sought to quantify the benefits to investors of trading on IEX instead of one of the other U.S. markets. It detected a very clear pattern: on IEX, stocks tended to trade at the "arrival price"—that is, the price at which the stock was quoted when their order arrived in the market. If they wanted to buy 20,000 shares of Microsoft, and Microsoft was offered at $40 a share, they bought at $40 a share. When they sent the same orders to other markets, the price of Microsoft moved against them. This so-called slippage amounted to nearly a third of 1 percent. In 2014, this giant money manager bought and sold roughly $80 billion in U.S. stocks. The teachers and firefighters and other middle-class investors whose pensions it managed were collectively paying a tax of roughly $240 million a year for the benefit of interacting with high-frequency traders in unfair markets.

Anyone who still doubts the existence of the Invisible Scalp might avail himself of the excellent research of the market-data company Nanex and its founder, Eric Hunsader. In a paper published in July 2014, Hunsader was able to show what exactly happens when an ordinary professional investor submits an order to buy an ordinary common stock. All the investor saw was that he bought just a fraction of the stock on offer before its price rose. Hunsader was able to show that high-frequency traders pulled their offer of some shares and jumped in front of the investor to buy others and thus caused the share price to rise.

The rigging of the stock market cannot be dismissed as a dispute between rich hedge-fund guys and clever techies. It's not even the case that the little guy trading in underpants in his basement is immune to its costs. In January 2015 the S.E.C. fined UBS for creating order types inside its dark pool that enabled high-frequency traders to exploit ordinary investors, without bothering to inform any of the non-high-frequency traders whose orders came to the dark pool. The UBS dark pool happens to be, famously, a place to which the stock-market orders of lots of small investors

PHOTOGRAPH © SIMON BELCHER/ALAMY

get routed. The stock-market orders placed through Charles Schwab, for instance. When I place an order to buy or sell shares through Schwab, that order is sold by Schwab to UBS. Inside the UBS dark pool, my order can be traded against, legally, at the "official" best price in the market. A high-frequency trader with access to the UBS dark pool will know when the official best price differs from the actual market price, as it often does. Put another way: the S.E.C.'s action revealed that the UBS dark pool had gone to unusual lengths to enable high-frequency traders to buy or sell stock from me at something other than the current market price. This clearly does not work to my advantage. Like every other small investor, I would prefer not to be handing some other trader a right to trade against me at a price worse than the current market price. But my misfortune explains why UBS is willing to pay Charles Schwab to allow UBS to trade against my order.

SOME PEOPLE ON WALL STREET WANTED TO FIX SOMETHING, EVEN IF IT MEANT LESS MONEY FOR WALL STREET, AND FOR THEM PERSONALLY.

The Best of Times, the Worst of Times

As time passed, the defenses erected by the high-frequency-trading lobby improved. The next was: the author of *Flash Boys* fails to understand that investors have never had it better, thanks to computers and the high-frequency traders who know how to use them. This line has been picked up and repeated by stock-exchange executives, paid high-frequency-trading spokespeople, and even journalists. It's not even half true, but perhaps half of it is half true. The cost of trading stocks has fallen a great deal in the last 20 years. These savings were fully realized by 2005 and were enabled less by high-frequency market-making than by the Internet, the subsequent competition among online brokers, the decimalization of stock prices, and the removal of expensive human intermediaries from the stock market. The story *Flash Boys* tells really doesn't open until 2007. And since late 2007, as a study published in early 2014 by the investment-research broker ITG has neatly shown, the cost to investors of trading in the U.S. stock market has, if anything, risen—possibly by a lot.

Finally there came a more nuanced line of defense. For obvious reasons, it was expressed more often privately than publicly. It went something like this: O.K., we admit some of this bad stuff goes on, but not every high-frequency trader does it. And the author fails to distinguish between "good" H.F.T. and "bad" H.F.T. He further misidentifies H.F.T. as the villain, when the real villains are the banks and the exchanges that enable—nay, encourage—H.F.T. to prey on investors.

There's some actual truth in this, though the charges seem to me directed less at the book I wrote than at the public response to it. The public response surprised me: the attention became focused almost entirely on high-frequency trading, when—as I thought I had made clear—the problem wasn't just high-frequency trading. The problem was the entire system. Some high-frequency traders were guilty of not caring a great deal about the social consequences of their trading—but perhaps it's too much to expect Wall Street traders to worry about the social consequences of their actions. From his seat onstage beside Warren Buffett at the 2014 Berkshire Hathaway investors' conference, vice-chairman Charlie Munger said that high-frequency trading was "the functional equivalent of letting a lot of rats into a granary" and that it did "the rest of the civilization no good at all." I honestly don't feel that strongly about high-frequency trading. The big banks and the exchanges have a clear responsibility to protect investors—to handle investor stock-market orders in the best possible way, and to create a fair marketplace. Instead, they've been paid to compromise investors' interests while pretending to guard those interests. I was surprised more people weren't angry with them.

If I didn't do more to distinguish "good" H.F.T. from "bad" H.F.T., it was because I saw, early on, that there was no practical way for me or anyone else without subpoena power to do it. In order for someone to be able to evaluate the strategies of individual high-frequency traders, the firms need to reveal the contents of their algorithms. They don't do this. They cannot be charmed or cajoled into doing this. Indeed, they sue, and seek to jail, their own former employees who dare to take lines of computer code with them on their way out the door.

Rookie Season

In the months after the publication of *Moneyball,* I got used to reading quotes from baseball insiders saying that the author of the book couldn't possibly know what he was talking about, as he was not a "baseball expert." In the 11 months since the publication of *Flash Boys,* I've read lots of quotes from people associated with the H.F.T. lobby saying the author is not a "market-structure expert." Guilty as charged! Back in 2012, I stumbled upon Katsuyama and his team of people, who knew more about how the stock market actually worked than anyone then being paid to serve as a public expert on market structure. Most of what I know I learned from them. Of course I checked their understanding of the market. I spoke with high-frequency traders and people inside big banks, and I toured the public exchanges. I spoke to people who had sold retail-order flow and people who had bought it. And in the end it was clear that Brad Katsuyama and his band of brothers were reliable sources—that they had learned a lot of things about the inner workings of the stock market that were unknown to the wider public. The controversy that followed the book's publication hasn't been pleasant for them, but it's been fun for me to see them behave as bravely under fire as they did before the start of the war. It's been an honor to tell their story.

The controversy has come with a price: it has swallowed up the delight an innocent reader might have taken in this little episode in financial history. If this story has a soul, it is in the decisions made by its principal characters to resist the temptation of easy money and to pay special attention to the spirit in which they live their working lives. I didn't write about them because they were controversial. I wrote about them because they were admirable. That some minority on Wall Street is getting rich by exploiting a screwed-up financial system is no longer news. That is the story of the last financial crisis, and probably the next one, too. What comes as news is that there is now a minority on Wall Street trying to fix the system. Their new stock market is flourishing; their company is profitable; Goldman Sachs remains their biggest single source of volume; they still seem to be on their way to changing the world. All they need is a little help from the silent majority. □

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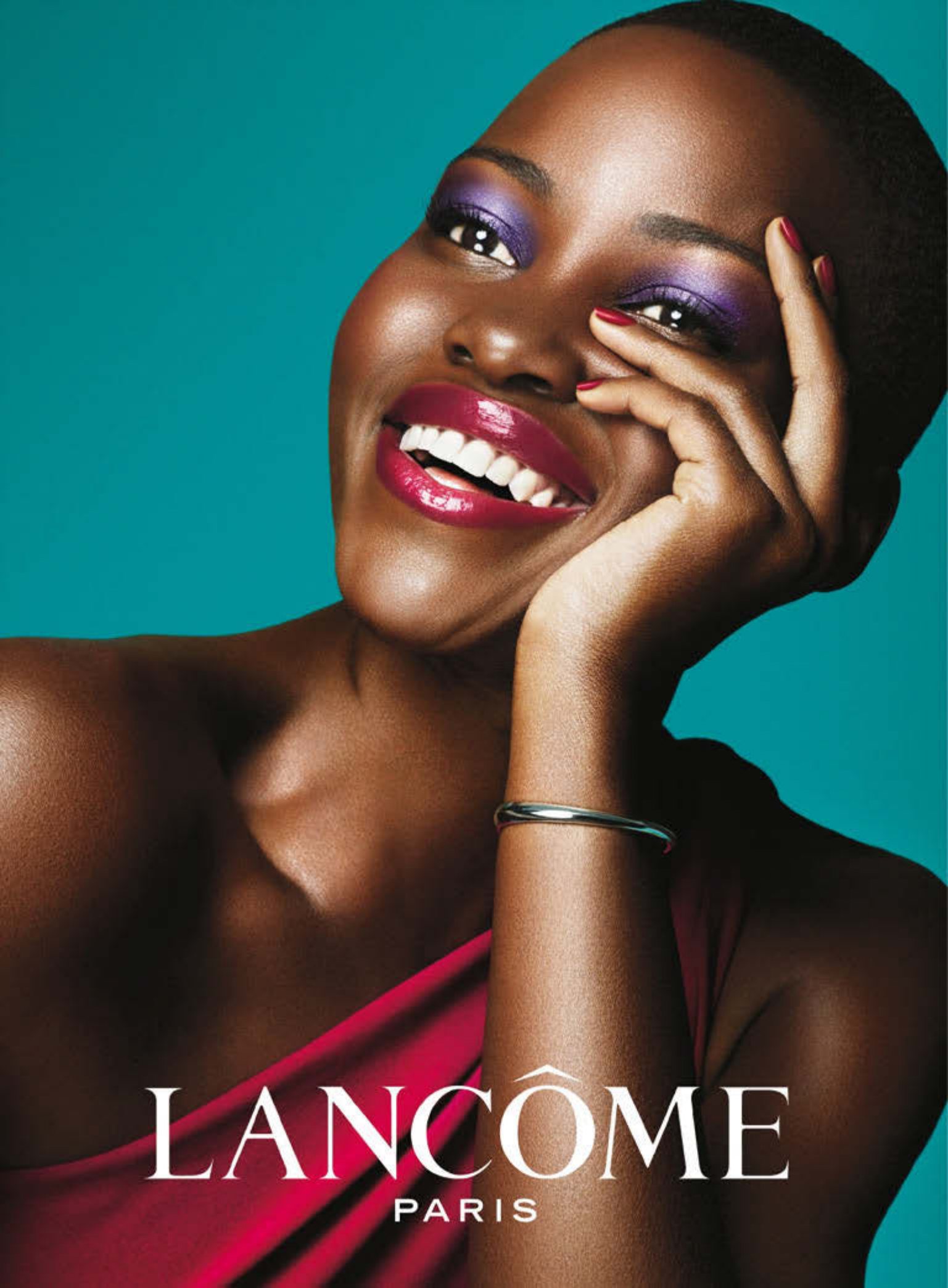
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NORA EPHRON (*Sleepless in Seattle, You've Got Mail*) in New York, 2009.

PHOTOGRAPHS: LEFT, BY ILONA LIEBERMAN/RETNA LTD.; RIGHT, BY ANDREW DURHAM/CPI SYNDICATION

A FILM OF

Amid fresh critiques of Hollywood's gender divide, here's ample proof that stardom (Barbra Streisand, Jodie Foster, Angelina Jolie) or simply leaned in and charged and Lina Wertmüller to Kathryn Bigelow and Ava DuVernay, LAURA JACOBS



SOFIA COPPOLA (*Lost in Translation, Marie Antoinette*) in Germany, 2013.

ONE'S OWN

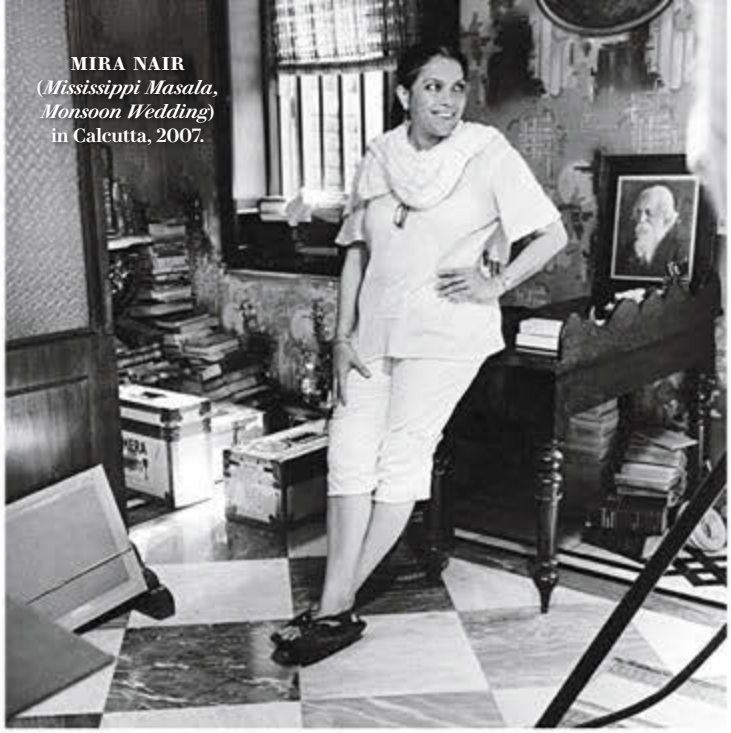
women can thrive in the director's chair. Whether they've leveraged screen ahead, who would dare stop the creative forces on these pages? From Ida Lupino surveys the achievements of cinema's women behind the camera

Women have stormed the top tiers of government, business, literature, and media, but when it comes to certain art forms, they're still dancing between raindrops. We've yet to see significant numbers of female choreographers in classical dance or as maestros on the podiums of high-budget American orchestras. And while the dominatrix is much in play in the millennial psyche, the foundational whip-and-riding-boot roles—circus ringmaster, four-star general—are stubbornly masculine. Recently, the studios have been criticized for not hiring more female directors. Manohla Dargis in *The New York Times* made the point that sexism in Hollywood "works like a virus that spreads through ideas, gossip, and stories about women . . . and doubts about whether they can hack it in that male-dominated world." Well, women directors have proved over and over again that not only can they hack it on the big screen, they can make a mark *and* a box-office hit. (Angelina Jolie's *Unbroken,* anyone?)

The feisty Ida Lupino was one of the first to crack the whip. Periodically suspended by Warner Bros. for refusing roles she deemed poor, she used her free time while on hiatus to study directing and then, rather effortlessly, dropped into the director's chair to make eight films from 1949 to 1966. Like Lupino, the actresses Barbra Streisand, Jodie Foster, and Jolie—all formidable in their field—moved from one side of the lens to the other. (And who would dare stop them?) This spring, the actress Elizabeth Banks hops on the bandwagon with her direction of *Pitch Perfect 2,* a May release that's already generating excitement.

Coming into the craft without superstar clout, though having been employed and mentored by Federico Fellini, Lina Wertmüller became the first woman to receive an Oscar nomination, in 1977, for best director (*Seven Beauties*). And Kathryn Bigelow, with 2009's *The Hurt Locker,* was the first and only woman to win in that category. (The film was also named best picture.) Perhaps the biggest brouhaha in recent months was the snub to the much-heralded *Selma:* the movie received an Oscar nod for best picture, but Ava DuVernay was not nominated as a director. (To be fair, this happens to men all the time.)

Awards aside, it is determined apprenticeship and a refusal to go away that make the difference. For both Nancy Meyers and the late Nora Ephron, for example, many small and varied successes lifted them up the ladder to triple-threat stature (screenwriter-director-producer). Knowing a good story when they saw one didn't hurt. So, here we are in 2015, and two movies with completely opposed definitions of female strength—*Fifty Shades of Grey* (which scored a record-breaking opening weekend) and *Wonder Woman* (due in 2017)—have female directors at the helm, respectively Sam Taylor-Johnson and Michelle MacLaren. Who needs a whip when you've got Amazonium bracelets and the Lasso of Truth!



MIRA NAIR (*Mississippi Masala, Monsoon Wedding*) in Calcutta, 2007.



BARBRA STREISAND directing *The Mirror Has Two Faces,* 1996.



ANGELINA JOLIE (*In the Land of Blood and Honey, Unbroken*), photographed by Mario Testino for *Vanity Fair*, 2014.

PHOTOGRAPHS: TOP LEFT, BY DAYANITA SINGH; BOTTOM LEFT, BY DAVID JAMES/© TRI-STAR/PHOENIX PICTURES/THE KOBAL COLLECTION



CLAIRE DENIS, in foreground, directing her segment of *Ten Minutes Older: The Cello,* 2002.



CATHERINE HARDWICKE with Amanda Seyfried and Shiloh Fernandez during the making of *Red Riding Hood,* 2010.



AVA DUVERNAY on the set of *Selma,* 2014.

JANE CAMPION (*The Piano, Bright Star*) lets loose at the Cannes Film Festival, 2006.





IDA LUPINO, second from right, and crew at work on *Hard, Fast and Beautiful,* 1951.



MICHELLE MACLAREN (*Wonder Woman*) in Los Angeles, 2015.



SAM TAYLOR-JOHNSON (*Nowhere Boy, Fifty Shades of Grey*), photographed by Nadav Kander for *V.F.* in London, 2014.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTOPHER ANDERSON/MAGNUM PHOTOS (HARDWICKE); AMANDA DEMME (MACLAREN); ALEX MAJOLI/MAGNUM PHOTOS (CAMPION); ATSUSHI NISHIJIMA/© PARAMOUNT PICTURES/EVERETT COLLECTION (DUVERNAY); © RKO PICTURES/PHOTOFEST (LUPINO); © WHY NOT PRODUCTIONS/PHOTOFEST (DENIS)



KATHRYN BIGELOW (*The Hurt Locker, Zero Dark Thirty*) in Italy, 2008.

PHOTOGRAPH, LEFT, BY NICOLAS GUERIN/CONTOUR/GETTY IMAGES; TOP RIGHT, FROM CONTACT PRESS IMAGES



Group portrait by Annie Leibovitz for *Vanity Fair*'s 1996 Hollywood Issue, featuring, clockwise from bottom left: **STACY COCHRAN, ANTONIA BIRD, TAMRA DAVIS, LESLI LINKA GLATTER, JOCELYN MOORHOUSE, RANDA HAINES, EUZHAN PALCY, AMY HECKERLING, BEEBAN KIDRON, MELANIE MAYRON, GILLIAN ARMSTRONG, LILI FINI ZANUCK, ALLISON ANDERS, JODIE FOSTER,** and Foster's dog, **LUCY.**



PENNY MARSHALL (*Big, A League of Their Own*), photographed by Brian Bowen Smith for *Vanity Fair*, 2007.



GIA COPPOLA (*Palo Alto*), photographed by Lisa Eisner for *Vanity Fair*, 2014.

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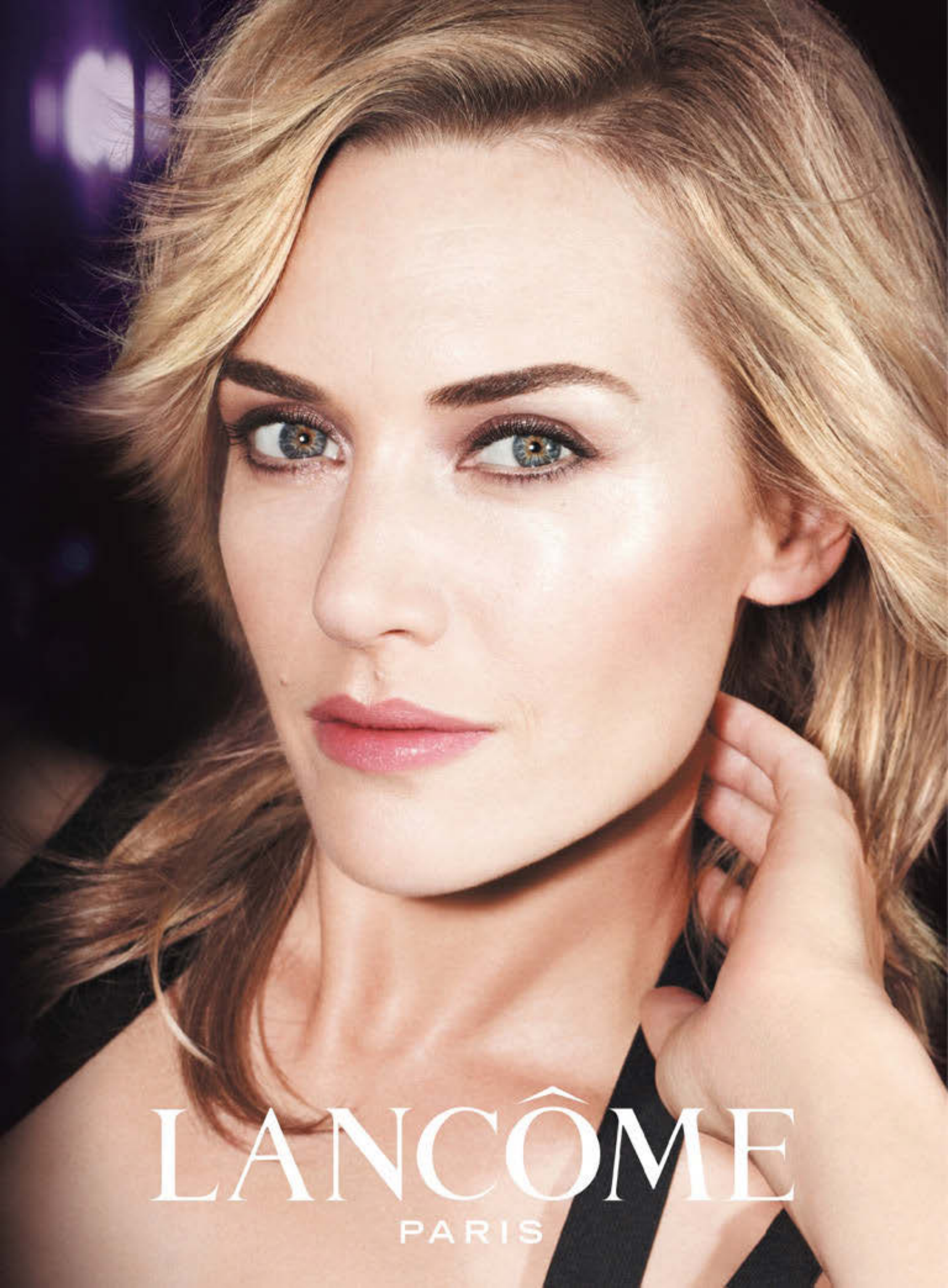


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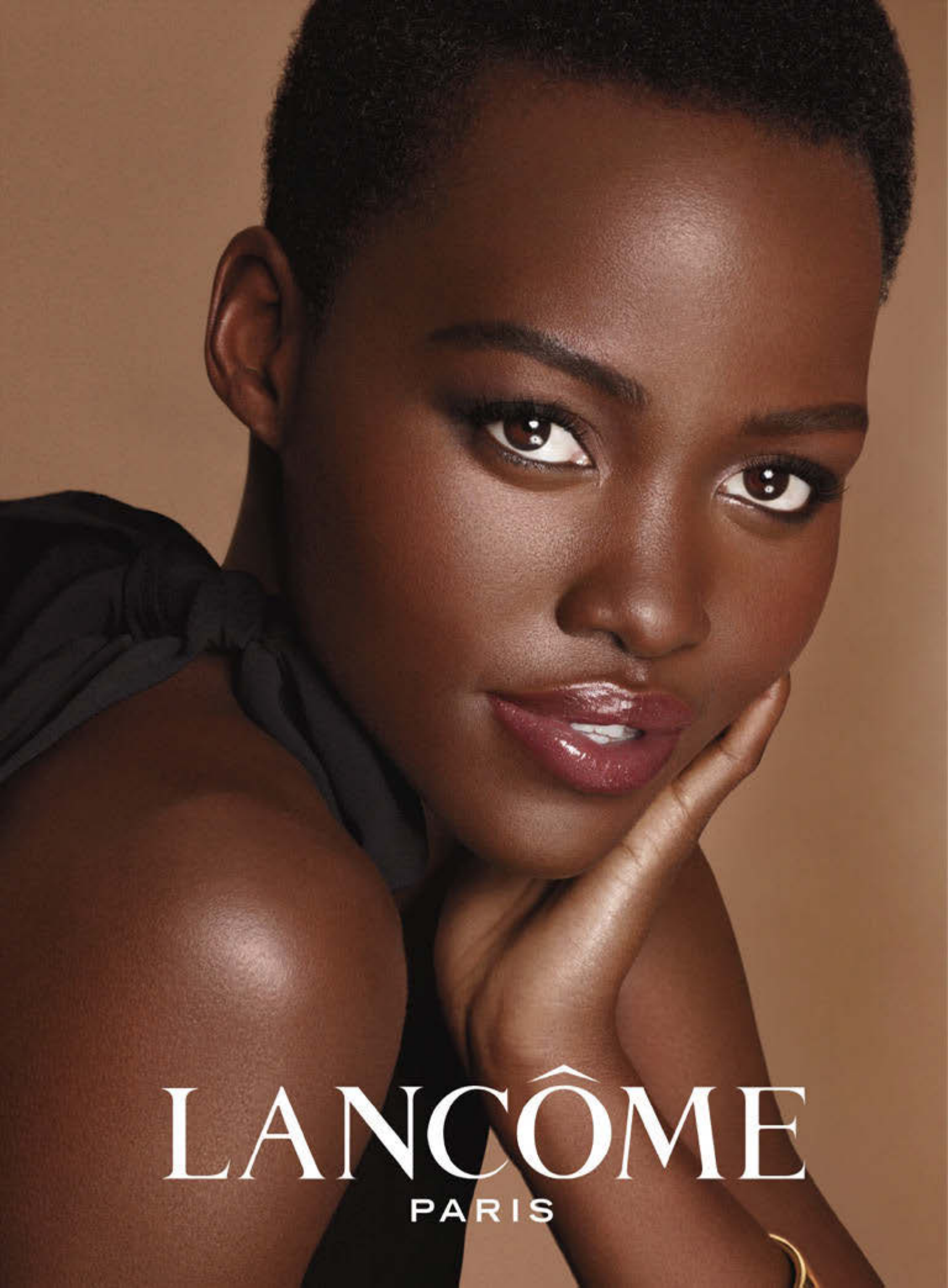
NANCY MEYERS (*Something's Gotta Give, It's Complicated*) shooting *The Holiday,* 2006.

BARBARA KOPPLE, center, directing *My Generation,* photographed by Annie Leibovitz for *V.F.,* 1999.



PHOTOGRAPHS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT, © COLUMBIA PICTURES/EVERETT COLLECTION; BY SANTI VISALLI/GETTY IMAGES DIGITAL COLORIZATION BY LORNA CLARK; FROM CONTACT PRESS IMAGES

LINA WERTMÜLLER on the set of *Seven Beauties*, in Italy, 1975.


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WRIGHT ON!
Robin Wright in New York. Tom Hanks cites her "mysterious presence . . . based on no small amount of physical grace and beauty."

WRIGHT WEARS A GOWN BY GIVENCHY BY RICCARDO TISCI; SHOES BY JIMMY CHOO.

It took Robin Wright three decades to find the role that has made her a major star—and the woman she wanted to be. With the release of the third season of *House of Cards*, in which her Claire Underwood is a coolly beautiful, terrifyingly pragmatic match for Kevin Spacey's Frank Underwood, Wright talks to SAM KASHNER about her marriage to Sean Penn, her human-rights work, and the current love of her life

Schemer

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PATRICK DEMARCHELIER • STYLED BY JESSICA DIEHL

David Fincher couldn't sleep. The celebrated director of such films as *Se7en, Gone Girl,* and *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* was up late in the Four Seasons in Baltimore, where he was staying while shooting the pilot episode of the Netflix political drama *House of Cards.* Fincher is an executive producer of the series as well as the director of the pilot.

He was pacing in his hotel room, thinking about the next day's shoot, when he flipped on the TV and found himself watching the 1990 gangster/cop movie *State of Grace,* co-starring Robin Wright and Sean Penn, with whom she was then romantically involved. "I gasped. I hadn't seen *State of Grace* in 20 years," Fincher said. "It was amazing to see the evolution of this 23-year-old to the woman she is now. You just go, Wow! Fantastic!"

Based on the 1990 BBC satirical political drama of the same name, the American *House of Cards* was moved from the British Parliament to Capitol Hill, in contemporary Washington, D.C. It first aired through Netflix streaming in February 2013. For the one or two of you who haven't seen it, the show centers on the political machinations of Frank Underwood (played by Kevin Spacey), a charming but ruthless congressman from South Carolina's Fifth District, and his formidable wife, Claire, who runs a nonprofit organization, the Clean Water Initiative (C.W.I.), and coolly abets her husband's scheming. When Underwood, serving as majority whip in the U.S. House of Representatives, is passed over for secretary of state, he begins a murderous campaign that ultimately wins him the presidency.

Fincher knew the series would hinge on perfect casting. And he knew exactly whom he wanted in the lead roles as the ultimate power couple: Spacey and the severely beautiful Robin Wright, whom he had directed two years earlier in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo.*

Fincher was right on both counts. *House of Cards,* once considered a risky experiment, won nine Primetime Emmy Awards and received four Golden Globe Award nominations in its first season and 13 Emmy nominations in its second season. Wright has won multiple awards for best actress in a television drama, including a Golden Globe, a Critics' Choice Television Award, and a Primetime Emmy.

Robin Wright Has a Cold

Vanity Fair met with Wright in Manhattan's Greenwich Village, on the eve of a blizzard that threatened to shut down the city. She was on Z-Pak, fighting a terrific cold ("croup," she called it, as anyone might who has raised two children). Wearing a newsboy cap and comfortably nestled in front of a fire in the Safari Room of the Beatrice Inn (co-owned by the editor of this magazine), she kept her beige checked Burberry scarf wrapped around her neck as she sipped chamomile tea.

Before playing Claire Underwood, Wright, who lives most of the year in Baltimore while filming *House of Cards,* was probably best known as Buttercup in the cult favorite *The Princess Bride,* and as the troubled Jenny opposite Tom Hanks in *Forrest Gump.* She actually began acting 31 years ago as Kelly Capwell, the "daddy's girl" ingénue on the soap opera *Santa Barbara,* and she has appeared in 43 films since then, often playing supporting characters. It took only three decades for her to find big, unequivocal stardom—ironically, back on the small screen.

When asked about the new fame and respect *House of Cards* has brought her, Wright answered, "I feel as though I've just graduated. I mean, I never went to college. I was pregnant at 23. You hear people say how they have 'arrived,' but it was just always there, waiting to come out. For me, it just took a long time. I'm 48. I'm finally a person. I think I'm finally ready."

Jodie Foster, who directed Wright in an episode of *House of Cards,* also believes that Wright has finally "settled into a pair of shoes that were the ones that were always supposed to fit her." Foster says she's "been talking up Robin Wright for 20 years—it's just so clear she's an amazing actress, one of the best we've got. But she was in movies that were not home runs."

Rebecca Miller, who cast Wright in the lead role of the 2009 film adaptation of her novel, *The Private Lives of Pippa Lee,* felt that part of the actress's late launch was due to the fact that she was "a great actress trapped inside the body of a Norse goddess." So, perhaps Wright was smart to develop herself as a character actress, instead of just relying on the looks that made her a fashion model at the age of 16. "This is her flowering and her becoming," Miller explains. "There's something about her subtlety and her approach that's just very special—she achieves liftoff in a way that very few people can do. With *House of Cards,* she's *created* a character."

Claire Underwood has been described as manipulative, ruthless, and calculating, but Wright doesn't really see her that way. "I can't see her as evil and cunning. To me, she's utilitarian and efficient," Wright said between sips of tea.

Part of what makes the character so intimidating is her fierce,

"I GREW UP VERY FAST AS A YOUNG GIRL, BUT I GREW SLOWLY INTO MY WOMANHOOD."

HAIR PRODUCTS BY ORLANDO PITA; MAKEUP PRODUCTS BY KEVYN AUCOIN; NAIL ENAMEL BY CHANEL; HAIR BY ORLANDO PITA; MAKEUP BY MARK CARRASQUILLO; MANICURE BY RIEKO OKUSA; SET DESIGN BY MARY HOWARD. FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS



WRIGHT TOGETHER?
Wright says of her 14-year marriage to Sean Penn that she learned to love "for the next time around, the right way."

WRIGHT WEARS A DRESS BY SALVATORE FERRAGAMO.



WRIGHT MODEL

House of Cards **director David Fincher says people ask if the couple on the show is meant to be seen as Bill and Hillary Clinton. "It shouldn't be," he says.**

WRIGHT WEARS A TOP BY CÉLINE.

WITH PENN "IT WAS A SIMPLE DECISION: 'YOU GO WORK—I'LL STAY WITH THE KIDS.'"

androgynous beauty. First, there's the ultra-short haircut. It came about by chance. "I was just cutting off damaged hair—too much bleach over months of [appearing in] different movies," Wright explained. "It was a mercy killing, but it works for the character."

Her wardrobe, by first-season costume designer Tom Broecker, is a study in muted elegance, by way of Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, Gucci, Armani, and Zac Posen. For decades Washington, D.C., has been known for a somewhat dowdy style for women—pantsuits and low-heeled shoes. (John F. Kennedy, while still a senator living in Georgetown, once described the city as possessing "Southern efficiency and Northern charm.") Not so in *House of Cards.* Claire's stiletto heels, pencil skirts, crisp white blouses, and asymmetrical, sleeveless dresses revealing striking, toned arms give her the look of a sleek warrior. "Helping build Claire's wardrobe has been a hoot!" Wright noted. "Sleek, sexy, and all woman."

The role, and the image, really clicked for her when Fincher suggested that she think of Claire as resembling a marble bust, appropriate in D.C., that city of monuments. "There's something in that stillness," she said. Fincher recalls, "We discussed that whole idea—I said, 'Your job is to remain immovable, and it's everyone else's job to orbit you.'"

The series's 37-year-old show-runner, Beau Willimon, said that he didn't think of himself as "having created Claire. I think of Claire as a collaboration. Robin created Claire as much as I and the writers did. Unlike Elizabeth Urquhart [played by Diane Fletcher] in the BBC version, we wanted her front and center, to be equal to her husband—the couple pursued a mutual ascendancy, almost completely from scratch." Willimon learned from Wright that, for Claire, "fewer words are better. Her real strength is between the lines. She'd ask me, 'Can we cut these three lines? I think I can act them.' Claire is a woman of few words, but well-chosen and powerful words. She doesn't bloviate. When she speaks, it's powerful, potent, fast."

Jodie Foster understood immediately that the relationship between Claire and Frank is crucial to the show's success. "This is in some ways the greatest love story of all time because each of them accepts the gravest, shameful secrets about the other." In Season One, Claire is well aware of Frank's adultery with the ambitious newspaper reporter Zoe Barnes (played by Kate Mara), but she allows it because she knows it can further his career. In Season Two, Frank helps Claire spin the tabloid news of her affair with an acclaimed New York photographer, Adam Galloway (played by Ben Daniels). "If the show didn't have that—if it was just Frank and his machinations—I don't think it would've been of interest," Foster believes.

Fincher confided that "a lot of people were asking, Is this meant to be Bill and Hillary? It shouldn't be, but what I do love—especially with Bill and Hillary—is there's an unfathomable place at which they meet, and you're not going to get to the bottom of it. That was kind of where we started."

A leitmotif of the show is the intimate moment when Claire and Frank, framed by a window in their town house, share a postcoital cigarette, except that it's for a coitus that never happens. "I love the idea of that," said Fincher. "There is this intimacy, a moment where they decompress from the day. You know, Machiavelli is only as good as his right hand, and he needs to keep her apprised."

And satisfied.

Becoming an Actor

As snow began to swirl outside the windows of the Beatrice Inn, we talked about the trajectory of her career. She said that becoming an actor wasn't anything she'd planned, but "from a very young age my brother and I would perform for my mother. We were mimics. We would do accents. We would do characters for her. Keep her entertained. You know, you love to make your parents laugh." Her older brother, Richard, took up ballet at age 15 and danced with Baryshnikov at American Ballet Theatre. "He was ballet; I went into modern jazz. And that was my life—get out of school, 11 A.M., [then] independent study and dance for 10 hours a day. My dream was to come to New York and be a dancer on Broadway. I wanted to be in *A Chorus Line* and *Cats*!"

Following her divorce from pharmaceutical sales rep Freddie Wright, Robin's mother, Gayle Gaston Wright, moved her two talented offspring from Fort Worth, Texas, to La Jolla, California, where there wasn't an opportunity to study dance. Instead, Robin began modeling. She looked like the quintessential California girl—athletic and sun-kissed. She "danced in commercials, holding Doritos," until her talent agent, Eileen Farrell, suggested she audition for John Hughes, the director of a slew of popular teen-themed films (*The Breakfast Club, Ferris Bueller's Day Off, Sixteen Candles, Pretty in Pink*). Despite several callbacks, she never made it into a John Hughes movie.

Wright describes herself as "painfully shy as a kid" but says her mother was congenial and outgoing. After her divorce, she got together with some of her friends, including entrepreneur Mary Kay Ash, and they started selling cosmetics door-to-door. "From the time I was wee big, my mother was one of the first members of Mary Kay Cosmetics. Women going door-to-door and letting housewives have their own business—that was really a breakthrough. It was huge." Robin grew up with beauty shows in their home. "We were driven to school in a pink Cadillac [a perk awarded to top Mary Kay saleswomen] every day."

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For more on **CLAIRE UNDERWOOD'S** style, go to VF.COM/APRIL2015.

Wright went on auditions for almost two years and didn't get anything but a bit part on a short-lived nighttime soap, *The Yellow Rose,* with Sam Elliott and Cybill Shepherd. "I'd basically thrown in the towel after I wasn't getting anything, graduated high school, kept driving to L.A. from La Jolla [to audition]. I had already done Europe for eight months, modeled right out of high school, and decided to go back to California to pursue acting again. Well, I didn't get anything. You know, three and four callbacks—and I never got it. That just happened 14 million times for all of those CONTINUED ON PAGE 196

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Jacob Rothschild *and* David Rockefeller

Born into two of the financial world's most storied dynasties, David Rockefeller and Jacob Rothschild may be in the winter of life, but they are still looking to the future. Saluting their recent partnership, CHARLIE ROSE examines the ways these two men have gilded their family legacies. Photograph by ANNIE LEIBOVITZ



Few families have stood the test of time like the Rockefellers and the Rothschilds. The Rockefellers—founders of the Standard Oil Company in 1870 and a wealth-management firm in 1882; philanthropists of vast generosity in both the arts and the sciences—are considered old money in America. But they are somewhat new-minted compared with the Rothschilds, a name in banking that commenced in the late 1790s and a family whose footprint is large and far-reaching in art institutions all over the world. Three years ago, in May of 2012, the two dynasties came together in a deal that was quietly and poetically momentous.

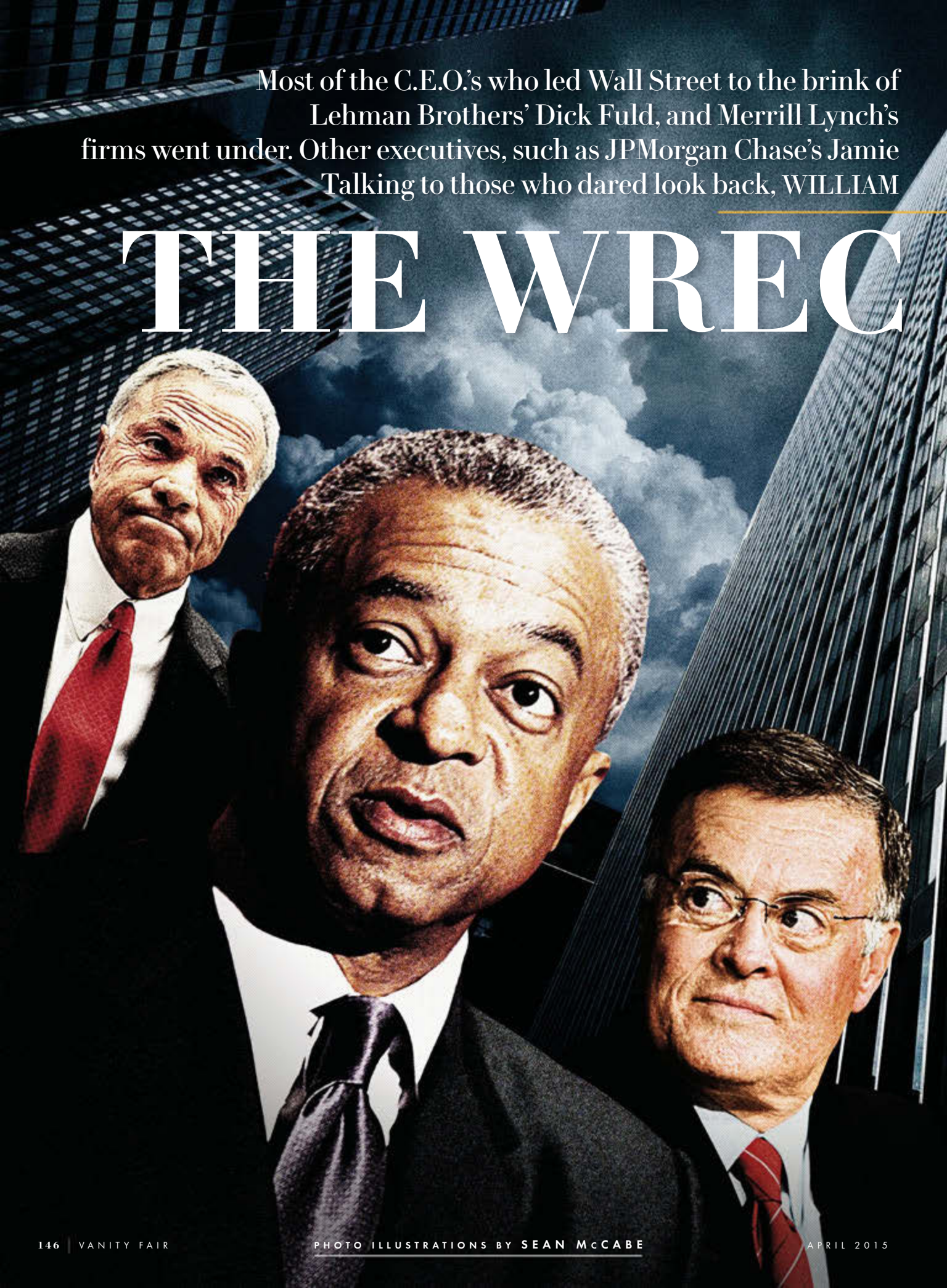
The deal was done by two remarkable men: David Rockefeller, who is now 99, and Jacob Rothschild—Lord Rothschild, fourth Baron Rothschild—who is 78. Two lions in winter, they have known each other for 50 years; they have also had parallel lives, growing up on grand estates and surrounded by an abundance of art, ancestors, and siblings. David went to Harvard and the London School of Economics and earned a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. Jacob graduated from Eton and Oxford. They both jumped into careers in finance.

The deal is simple. RIT Capital Partners, led by Rothschild, bought a 37 percent share in Rockefeller Financial Services. In a world of billion-dollar mergers, this is small. In history, it is huge. As Michael Bloomberg, who has more money than Rockefeller and Rothschild combined, has said, "If only my father knew that I know David Rockefeller and Jacob Rothschild, he would be so proud."

I suspect it is in philanthropy and art preservation that these two new partners will be acclaimed: David, of course, for the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Museum of Modern Art (where his mother, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, played such a prominent role); Jacob, meanwhile, as chairman of the board of trustees of the National Gallery, the National Heritage Memorial Fund, and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The legacy of their deeds raises a question: Who, after they are gone, will make the same commitment to the preservation of the past and the science of the future? □



DYNASTIC DUO
Lord Jacob Rothschild and David Rockefeller, photographed at the latter's residence.



Most of the C.E.O.'s who led Wall Street to the brink of
Lehman Brothers' Dick Fuld, and Merrill Lynch's
firms went under. Other executives, such as JPMorgan Chase's Jamie
Talking to those who dared look back, WILLIAM

THE WREC

PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY SEAN McCABE

collapse in 2008—the likes of Bear Stearns's Jimmy Cayne, Stan O'Neal and John Thain—got huge payouts as their Dimon and Goldman Sachs's Gary Cohn, rode out the maelstrom. D. COHAN discovers how their worlds have changed

KING CREW



GONE GUYS
Countrywide's Angelo Mozilo, Merrill Lynch's Stan O'Neal, Bank of America's Ken Lewis, Merrill's John Thain, Bear Stearns's Jimmy Cayne, and Lehman Brothers' Dick Fuld.

Once upon a time, Jimmy Cayne, now 81, had a lot to say about the sad fate that befell Bear Stearns, the Wall Street investment bank he ran for nearly 15 years before its shocking collapse, in March 2008. In more than 20 hours of interviews with me that summer, portions of which later appeared in my book *House of Cards,* he blamed Wall Street competitors and an amorphous group of hedge funds for conspiring to take down the 85-year-old firm. He was especially angry about then New York Federal Reserve Bank president Tim Geithner's decision to allow Bear's competitors access to crucial Federal Reserve funding, permitting them to fight another day, while his firm was denied such funds and faced the choice of either filing for bankruptcy or being sold to JPMorgan Chase for a pittance (which is what happened). Smoking $150 Cuban cigars, obtained through secret sources in Lebanon, he fumed, "The audacity of that prick in front of the American people announcing he was deciding whether or not a firm of this stature was good enough to get a loan. . . . It's just that for some clerk to make a decision based on what, your own personal feeling about whether or not they're a good credit [risk]? Who the fuck asked you? You're not an elected officer. You're a clerk. Believe me, you're a clerk."

That was then. These days, Cayne isn't talking. Neither he nor his attorney Melissa Prober, at Kramer Levin, responded to requests to speak about the financial crisis for this article. But Cayne is still around. He continues to be a force in the world of contract bridge. Last October, he competed in (but did not win) the 15-day Red Bull World Bridge Series, in China. In November he and his wife, Patricia, posed for photographers at the Children's Cancer and Blood Foundation Breakthrough Ball Benefit Gala, at the Plaza Hotel. The event was conveniently located for them: upstairs, on the 14th floor, was the couple's 6,000-square-foot apartment, which they bought for $28.24 million a month before Bear Stearns imploded.

Even though Cayne lost around $1 billion when the value of his Bear Stearns stock fell to around $2 a share in the days after the March 15 agreement to sell to JPMorgan Chase, he was able to sell it all a few weeks later for around $61 million after JPMorgan was forced to increase the price of the deal to $10 a share. "The only people [who] are going to suffer are my heirs, not me," he told me back then. "Because when you have a billion six and you lose a billion, you're not exactly, like, crippled, right?" He told me his net worth was then around $400 million, although some people wonder if that may be a bit of an exaggeration, in keeping with Cayne's general flamboyance. In addition to the Plaza apartment and his huge beach house, in New Jersey, he also owns a sixth-floor condominium at the posh Boca Beach Club, in Boca Raton, Florida, for which he reportedly paid $2.75 million in 2010, through a trust bearing the name Legion Holdings III, according to the Web site Gossip Extra.

Last December, Cayne sat for a deposition in a lawsuit brought by Bruce S. Sherman, an angry former C.E.O. of a Florida-based hedge fund, which lost approximately $500 million when Bear Stearns collapsed. According to a person familiar with the conversation, Cayne's recollection of the meltdown has become cloudy. Some say he is just being cagey; others say he is a little out of it, a combination of getting older and spending too much time far from the Wall Street action that was once his lifeblood. He no longer remembers anything about the adequacy of Bear's risk models. He no longer admits to having had anything to do with the decision to close down the two problematic Bear Stearns hedge funds that had disastrously invested in subprime mortgages. He doesn't remember being notified about problems on Bear's trading desk, or about Bear's inability to obtain financing from the market, or the billions of dollars of lethal mortgage-backed securities on its balance sheet. In public, anyway, he has become a jovial but forgetful old man who knows that any payments to Sherman will be coming out of JPMorgan Chase's shareholders' pockets, not his own. "He's just kind of sad" these days, a longtime friend of his told me.

The Gang's All Here

Cayne is not alone among former Wall Street executives in preferring not to revisit the events of 2008. Stan O'Neal, the former chairman and C.E.O. of Merrill Lynch & Co., contacted through a friend, doesn't want to talk about that time, either. In the years leading up to the crisis—he resigned under fire in October 2007—O'Neal was the person, many people at Merrill believe, chiefly responsible for ratcheting up the firm's risktaking, allowing its balance sheet to get larded with squirrelly debt securities, just as savvier firms such as Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan Chase were aggressively de-risking their balance sheets. He is said to feel "bitter" about the way he was treated by the press before and after Merrill's collapse. But he isn't nursing his wounds on the breadline.

O'Neal left Merrill with a severance package of around $161.5 million, on top of his 2006 pay of $91.4 million. It is not exactly clear what he does these days, other than serve on the board of directors of Alcoa.

"HOW DO I FEEL ABOUT [THE] C.E.O.'S WHO WALKED AWAY WITH ... $150 MILLION AND THEIR COMPANY BLEW UP?" SAYS DIMON. "IT'S OUTRAGEOUS."

PAGES 146–47: PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEREMY BALES/BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES (LEWIS), DIANE BONDAREFF/POLARIS (O'NEAL), MICHAEL BROWN/GETTY IMAGES (BUILDING), ANDREW HARRER/BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES (CAYNE), ERIC THAYER/REUTERS/LANDOV (THAIN), © SHAWN THEW/EPA/CORBIS (FULD), BY ROGER L. WOLLENBERG/UPI/LANDOV (MOZILO)

He doesn't much keep in touch with his old friends, and he has moved from his Park Avenue apartment to the Upper West Side of Manhattan. "He seems to have retreated from the world," a friend says.

John Thain, a former partner at Goldman Sachs and onetime C.E.O. of the New York Stock Exchange, got a $15 million signing bonus to replace O'Neal as the C.E.O. of Merrill in January 2008. Thain then steered Merrill to its inevitable demise, in September 2008, when Bank of America bought it for $50 billion in stock, thanks to a major financial assist from the federal government. Thain, too, declined to be interviewed for this piece. Since February 2010, he has been the chairman and C.E.O. of CIT Group, a middle-market lender. His total compensation from CIT in 2013 was $8.25 million and his approximately 350,000 shares of CIT stock are worth around $16 million.

But Thain was already rich. As a pre-I.P.O. partner of Goldman Sachs and a co–chief operating officer of the firm, he received a windfall of more than $500 million when Goldman went public, in May 1999. He still lives at 740 Park Avenue, home to Ronald Lauder and Stephen Schwarzman, among others, in an apartment he bought for $27.5 million from the philanthropist Enid Haupt, in 2006. He also still owns a 14-bedroom mansion, on more than 10 acres, in Westchester, with two swimming pools and a tennis court.

The man who bought Merrill Lynch for $50 billion right before it would have tumbled into bankruptcy, Ken Lewis, the former C.E.O. of Bank of America, is also keeping mum these days. "Thanks for the opportunity but I have no desire to go back to that time," Lewis wrote me. In March 2014, Lewis agreed to a three-year ban from serving as an officer of a public company and to pay a $10 million fine as part of a settlement with Eric Schneiderman, the New York State attorney general, dealing with claims that he and other Bank of America executives misrepresented to shareholders the impact the Merrill acquisition would have on Bank of America's earnings. In bringing the lawsuit against Lewis, Andrew Cuomo, Schneiderman's predecessor (and now New York's governor), alleged that Lewis knew that Merrill's earnings would be far less than originally expected, in part because of large bonuses that the brokerage had paid out to its bankers, traders, and executives and in part because of the ongoing write-downs of its risky mortgage-related assets. As part of the settlement with Schneiderman, Bank of America agreed to pay $15 million and to cover Lewis's $10 million fine, too.

When Lewis left Bank of America, at the end of 2009, he was entitled to as much as $83 million, in a combination of pension and insurance benefits, as well as stock and other compensation. He now, reportedly, lives in a 10,000-square-foot, $4.1 million condominium in Naples, Florida, overlooking the Gulf of Mexico.

Lewis, it will be recalled, also engineered another disas-



SURVIVORS Goldman Sachs C.E.O. Lloyd Blankfein and C.O.O. Gary Cohn and JPMorgan Chase C.E.O. Jamie Dimon.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GERALD HOLUBOWICZ/POLARIS (BUILDING); SAUL LOEB/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (DIMON); FROM POLARIS (BLANKFEIN); © MICHAEL REYNOLDS/EPA/CORBIS (COHN)

ASKED IF HE IS WAITING

FOR BLANKFEIN TO RETIRE,

COHN SAYS, "I'M A HAPPY GUY. I'M HERE ... ON A FRIDAY NIGHT TALKING TO YOU."

trous deal: Bank of America's $4 billion purchase in January 2008 of Angelo Mozilo's Countrywide Financial Corporation, which may go down as one of the worst deals in American corporate history. The timing could not have been worse, and Countrywide's ongoing liabilities still seem bottomless. Since 2008, Bank of America has paid monetary and non-monetary fines and penalties of more than $91 billion, according to the finance and business Web site Motley Fool, in some 51 settlements, including a record $16.65 billion to the Justice Department and several states in August 2014. Even though there was a time when Countrywide C.E.O. Angelo Mozilo was a regular guest on CNBC, flaunting an impossibly deep carroty tan along with flashy gangster-style charcoal suits, these days he rarely gives interviews. Nobody responded to messages left on phones at his office and at his 13,000-square-foot residence, in Santa Barbara, California.

Under the terms of his 2010 settlement with the Securities and Exchange Commission, for charges of both insider trading and misleading investors about the risks that Countrywide was taking on in underwriting increasingly troubled mortgages, the 76-year-old Mozilo paid $67.5 million and agreed to never again serve as the C.E.O. of a public company. He now occupies his time by investing in—of all things—real estate, and he has plenty of money for such investments. He was paid more than $500 million between 1999 and 2008, according to public records. He talks regularly with his old friend billionaire investor Ken Langone about investment opportunities, "equities, asset-backed deals, railroad cars, oil and gas. Private equity, structured finance, you name it," Langone told Bloomberg's Max Abelson last September. In 2013, Mozilo spent two weeks in Florence, Italy, teaching the fundamentals of finance—at his eponymous Mozilo Center—to undergraduates at a summer program affiliated with Gonzaga University.

And what has become of former Lehman Brothers C.E.O. Dick Fuld, the man who was told by Florida Republican congressman John Mica, "If you haven't discovered your role [in the financial crisis], you're the villain"? Under Fuld's leadership Lehman went down in flames during the fateful fall of 2008. In March 2009, after helping to unwind what remained after pieces of the company were bought by Barclays and others, Fuld set up a small firm, Matrix Advisors, to provide advice on mergers and acquisitions. It's an odd role for Fuld, now 68, since during his 42 years at Lehman Brothers he was never an M&A banker and failed miserably in leading his firm's strategic direction. His longtime attorney, Patricia Hynes, at Allen & Overy, used to tell reporters that he was not interested in talking to the press, but Hynes retired in 2014 and Fuld could not be reached for comment.

Fuld remains fabulously wealthy, although just how wealthy remains a subject of some dispute. During the same October 2008 congressional hearing in which he sparred with Mica and Henry Waxman, the committee chairman, about how much money he had made at Lehman, Waxman released a chart showing that Fuld had been paid $484 million between 2000 and 2007. Under oath, Fuld argued he had received closer to $310 million. Later in the hearing he conceded that it may have been $350 million. A subsequent analysis by Harvard law professor Lucian Bebchuk and colleagues concluded that the figure was $522.7 million; Oliver Budde, formerly a lawyer who worked at Lehman on regulatory matters, has calculated that Fuld made $529.4 million between 2000 and 2007.

In any event, Fuld still owns houses in Sun Valley, Idaho—said to be worth $19 million—and on Jupiter Island, Florida, for which he paid around $14 million in 2004. In 2009, he sold his Park Avenue apartment for $25.9 million but still owns a mansion in Greenwich, Connecticut. Last November, he showed up at the Museum of Modern Art's annual benefit for its film department with his wife, Kathy, who is a member of the museum's board of trustees. A week later, he surfaced in China to announce that he had advised one of his clients on the acquisition of something called the National Stock Exchange, a tiny New Jersey–based outfit that accounted for about 0.2 percent of U.S. stock-trading volume. During his visit, Fuld said that the National Stock Exchange was working with Suzhou Kaida Capital to help facilitate the initial public offerings of small Chinese companies in the United States.

Survivor: Wall Street

Not all Wall Street bankers took the money and ran.

For Gary Cohn, then, as now, the president and chief operating officer of Goldman Sachs, the "worst" moment of the crisis came on Sunday afternoon, September 14, 2008, just hours before Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy. He and Lloyd Blankfein, then, as now, Goldman's C.E.O., had spent all weekend with other Wall Street executives and government officials at the New York Federal Reserve Bank trying to fashion a solution to save Lehman. But it was not to be; Lehman would have to file for bankruptcy.

Cohn, 54, and Blankfein, 60, left the bank, in downtown Manhattan, on foot to return to Goldman's office, then at 85 Broad Street. Cohn had ordered the firm's traders to report to work that afternoon with the hope that Goldman, like other banks, would be able to settle its trades with Lehman in an orderly fashion. But now Cohn and Blankfein knew that would no longer be possible; instead it would be a free-for-all. The two walked down Broad Street together, neither saying a word. Cohn knew that he had to tell the traders to go home, that there was no sense in waiting, and Blankfein agreed to go with him. When he got back, Cohn dismissed the traders and told them to come

back early Monday morning prepared for the worst. The traders were stunned. When Cohn returned to his office, they began calling him, asking what they were supposed to do. Cohn instructed them to go home, to see their spouses and children. He assured them that it would all work out, even though he was far less than certain that would be the case.

Only in retrospect, Cohn explains, did he consider the depth of the existential danger Wall Street faced. "When you go through these situations you either just throw yourself in the middle of them and try to deal with everything coming at you 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or you sort of get in a position where you withdraw and you try and just reason and try to understand exactly what's going on," he says. "I tried to be in the first camp with just dealing with the situation real-time. . . . I was focused on Goldman Sachs and our clients and our liquidity and our risk position. And I probably, for better or worse, wasn't spending the time obsessing about the second-derivative and third-derivative and fourth-derivative things."

Understandably, he laments that his firm later became the *Zeitgeist*'s poster child for unethical behavior in the years after the crisis. It was labeled a "giant vampire squid" in *Rolling Stone,* lampooned on *The Daily Show,* hauled up in front of the Senate for an all-day hearing, and fined $550 million by the Securities and Exchange Commission for inadequate disclosure in the sale of a complex security.

Cohn says the firm has learned valuable lessons from being pilloried. "We talk more about what *should* we be doing as a firm, not just can we do things, what *should* we be doing?," he explains. "We think more expansively about our brand and our reputation. We engage a lot more with the press. We engage a lot more with Main Street. We try and explain ourselves more, and more today than we ever have, and those important lessons that we learned coming out of the crisis. And, you know, I think they are important lessons. I think they've made us a better firm in the end." One example of the new Goldman approach, Cohn says, is that the firm decided not to underwrite and sell so-called European contingent convertible, or "CoCo," bonds (which have terms favorable to the issuer) to retail investors, even though Goldman's competitors did. The firm decided they were not appropriate for anyone other than highly sophisticated investors.

Unlike Morgan Stanley, which has changed its business dramatically in order to deal with the structural changes it perceives in the industry, Goldman Sachs is sticking to its knitting. Cohn believes that when all the dust settles the disruption will prove to be cyclical, not structural. Wall Street will return to normal, with Goldman CONTINUED ON PAGE 190

SUDDENLY NEXT SUMMER



Britt Robertson, photographed in Beverly Hills.

ROBERTSON WEARS CLOTHING BY BOTTEGA VENETA; SHOES BY CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN; JEWELRY BY CARTIER.

Britt Robertson knows her life is about to change dramatically. "I go to the grocery store in my sweatpants now," she says with premature nostalgia. "No one really knows who I am." This May, Disney's *Tomorrowland*—directed by Brad Bird (*The Incredibles*)—will kick off the summer-blockbuster season. The film's two leads? Arguably the most famous actor in the world, George Clooney . . . and the 24-year-old Robertson.

Since she began acting, at the age of 10, Robertson has starred in two CW series—*Life Unexpected* and *The Secret Circle*—as well as the CBS science-fiction hit *Under the Dome.* But *Tomorrowland* promises to shift her career into a completely different gear. "When I got the role, it was the best feeling I'll ever have in my life," she says.

Robertson lights up as she recounts how Clooney introduced himself, the day before they started filming: "He was so not intimidating. We had some really funny banter." She recalls one night in Spain at the end of the shoot when Clooney called her over to his table at a hotel restaurant. "He gave me some great advice," Robertson says. "He said, 'Keep going. Don't just ride on this movie and hope that it does something good for you; get some momentum.' "

While she awaits *Tomorrowland*'s release, Robertson—who will also star in April's *The Longest Ride,* adapted from the Nicholas Sparks novel—is trying to stay calm amid a maelstrom of emotions. "When it comes out, it could be the biggest embarrassment of my life, or it could be the craziest thing that ever happened." —JOSH DUBOFF

STYLED BY DEBORAH AFSHANI; HAIR PRODUCTS BY WELLA PROFESSIONALS; MAKEUP PRODUCTS BY CLÉ DE PEAU BEAUTÉ; NAIL ENAMEL BY ESTÉE LAUDER; HAIR BY PETER BUTLER; MAKEUP BY OZZY SALVATIERRA; MANICURE BY KAREN GUTIERREZ; PRODUCED ON LOCATION BY DANA BROCKMAN; FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS

PHOTOGRAPH BY JASON BELL



The stars of *The King and I:* Ken Watanabe as King Mongkut of Siam and Kelli O'Hara as Anna Leonowens, surrounded by young actors playing the king's children; photographed in New York City.

COSTUME DESIGN BY CATHERINE ZUBER; WIG DESIGN BY TOM WATSON; MAKEUP DESIGN BY JON CARTER; O'HARA'S MAKEUP BY TANYA RAE; SET DESIGN BY MARY HOWARD STUDIO; ANTIQUE RUGS COURTESY OF HEIRLOOM RUGS AND J&D ORIENTAL RUGS CO.; FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS

RETURN *of the* KING

This month's Broadway revival of The King and I *had an obvious Anna. The surprise is its monarch*



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANNIE LEIBOVITZ



Watanabe and O'Hara perform the polka to the music of "Shall We Dance?"

FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS



For a Broadway musical that premiered in 1951, *The King and I* is shockingly relevant. Strip the show of such classics as "Getting to Know You" and "Shall We Dance?" and what remains is the story of a ruler with a dictatorial bent who is grappling with Western cultural influences and is at odds with women who demand to be heard. The contemporary feel of *The King and I* is what persuaded Bartlett Sher to stage the revival that opens this month at Lincoln Center Theater. "Rodgers and Hammerstein are like Shakespeare," Sher says. "You are engaged in very serious questions and at the same time have a good time."

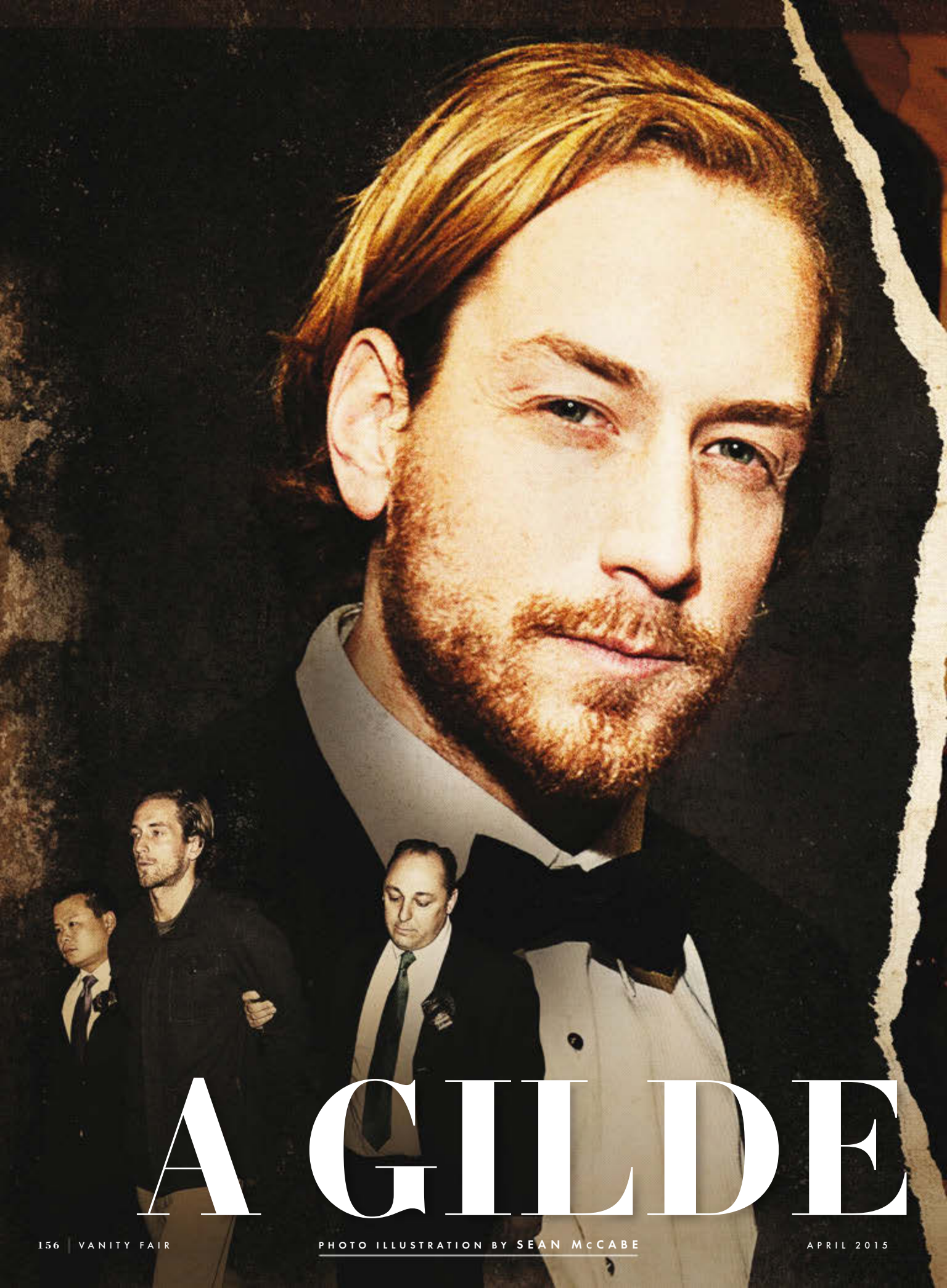
Casting Anna was easy. Kelli O'Hara had played Nellie Forbush to rapturous acclaim in Sher's revival of *South Pacific* at Lincoln Center in 2008, and the role of the widow who arrives in Siam with her young son to tutor the king's children allowed O'Hara to explore a character, as she puts it, "with more of a backbone" than nurse Forbush, who is "a kid at heart." But who to play King Mongkut? The part is so identified with the late Yul Brynner (he took home Tonys for both the original and a 1977 revival as well as an Oscar for the 1956 film) that if heaven has dinner theaters you can bet he's still on tour with Anna.

Sher's surprising and shrewd pick is Japanese film star Ken Watanabe, whose performance as the quietly noble garrison commander in Clint Eastwood's 2006 *Letters from Iwo Jima* so impressed the director that he sought out the actor two years ago in Vancouver, where Watanabe was filming *Godzilla*. "Bart said to me, 'I do not need a good singer. I do not need a good dancer. I need a king!' " he recalls. Sher prevailed, which is a tribute to his cajolery as much as it is to Watanabe's intrepidness. "In Japan, we have this expression," says Watanabe. "Even a pig will climb a tree if you sweet-talk him."

–JIM KELLY

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To see **COSTUME SKETCHES** from the show, go to VF.COM/APRIL2015.



A GILDE

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SEAN McCABE

BLOOD WILL OUT
Thomas Gilbert Sr. at the Hedge Fund Association Conference in New York, November 2014. *Opposite,* Thomas Gilbert Jr. at the School of American Ballet gala in New York, March 2014. *Inset,* Gilbert being escorted from the 17th Precinct, in Manhattan, on January 5, 2015, after being charged with the murder of his father.

PHOTOGRAPHS: TOP LEFT, BY AMANDA GORDON/BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES; BOTTOM LEFT, BY STEPHEN YANG/POLARIS; RIGHT, BY KEVIN KANE

The January killing of hedge-fund manager Thomas Gilbert Sr., allegedly by his 30-year-old son, Thomas Gilbert Jr., stunned New York society. For many in the younger man's circle, however, it wasn't such a shock. BENJAMIN WALLACE charts the implosion of a silver-spoon life

D RAGE

For the past 11 summers, the village of Sagaponack, on the eastern end of Long Island, has been the site of a Monday-night ritual hippie-ishly incongruous with the moneyed community of homeowners in this part of the Hamptons. At Sagg Main Beach, a flat, broad ribbon of sand dividing the Atlantic Ocean from Sagaponack Pond, the crowds begin to gather near six P.M., when a small circle of musicians starts pounding out Brazilian music on drums and sleigh bells, and beachgoers cluster around to listen and dance and take in the sunset with a beer.

Last September 1, at a drum circle near the end of the season, 32-year-old Peter Smith was hanging out with family and friends when he saw a face at once familiar and unwelcome. Smith's family had been coming to Sagaponack since 1973; his father, a retired Lazard Frères banker, had bought a historic house just down the road from the beach. The house had a timber frame and gabled roof, and part of it dated to the 1600s; Mr. Smith (also named Peter) was house-proud, often seen in a painter's cap and tool belt as he devoted countless hours to the home's meticulous restoration. But it was no museum piece, instead serving as a hub for loved ones and the larger community, including friends like Louis Malle, Larry Rivers, and former roommate Oliver Stone, and for years it was the site of an annual blowout summer party that drew as many as 800 people.

Peter the younger, a co-founder and C.O.O. of a shop-local e-commerce start-up called MadeClose, was popular and sociable, but when Tommy Gilbert approached him on the beach that evening, he was terrified, friends of Smith's say. (Smith declined to be interviewed.) Only two years earlier, the young men had been friends, with much in common. Both had attended the elite Buckley boys' school, on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Both came from families who belonged to the insular Wasp preserve known as the Maidstone Club, in East Hampton. Both loved to surf. For a time, they had been roommates in Brooklyn.

But then Gilbert had developed an obsessive vendetta against Smith, according to mutual friends, which culminated in a brutal attack on the street in October of 2013 that put Smith in the hospital and led him to obtain an order of protection against Gilbert. Now, though, nearly a year later, as vaguely tribal rhythms competed with the crashing surf for the crowd's attention, Gilbert, in violation of the order of protection, "literally came out of the darkness," someone close to Smith says, and ominously told Smith it was his last chance to have the order rescinded and be his friend once more. As others physically blocked Gilbert from Smith, "he was trying to get Peter to leave the crowd and walk down the dark, desolate beach with him, away from the bonfires and people."

Four months later, the Smith house on Sagg Main Street would be in ashes, Gilbert's father dead with a bullet wound in his head, Tommy in jail, and large swaths of New York society horrified and bewildered.

"A Little Bit Off"

On paper, Tommy Gilbert seemed sprung from the daydreams of F. Scott Fitzgerald. He grew up in what his father called "a small mansion" in Tuxedo Park, New York, and then at various tony Manhattan addresses (a Park Avenue apartment, a town house on East 61st Street). He was the son of an investment banker and a former debutante and was raised in an environment of extreme privilege. From Buckley, he'd gone to Deerfield Academy, then Princeton. He was a strapping six feet three inches, gym-bodied and catalogue-model-handsome, with a man-bun-worthy sweep of blond hair and piercing blue eyes. Anyone glancing at the galleries of black-tie society pictures online would have seen a dashing man-about-town, seemingly at ease among his fellow swells.

But those trappings concealed a less gilded truth. Thirty years old and five years out of college, Gilbert seemed never to have a full-time job and was on an allowance from his parents reported to have been $600 a week plus the $2,400 monthly rent for his modest apartment on West 18th Street, in Chel-


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STUDENT C

Bottom Row: Nicholas Thorne, Carl Balouzian, Ryan McCartn
Second Row: William Scharf, Tate Jackson, John deMenil
Third Row: Chris Ingram, Evan Gill



2



3

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL HELLER (7); STEVEN HIRSCH (4); FROM PATRICKMCMULLAN.COM (3, 5)

PRIVILEGE AND PATRICIDE

(1) Thomas Gilbert Jr. and then girlfriend Briana Swanson pose with the Nesquik bunny in Manhattan in July 2014. **(2)** Gilbert on the beach in Montauk in May 2014. **(3)** Socialite Lizzy Fraser, a former girlfriend of Gilbert's, at a fund-raiser in New York in 2010. **(4)** Gilbert at his arraignment in State Supreme Court in Manhattan on February 5, 2015. **(5)** The Smith family's house in Sagaponack before a fire destroyed it, on September 15, 2014. **(6)** The Buckley School's student council in 2000. **(7)** Firefighters battle the blaze at the Smith house; Gilbert is "a person of interest."



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sea. He told friends about having come up with an algorithm that was earning him a living as a day trader and spoke of starting a hedge fund, even filing papers with the S.E.C. last May to register a hedge fund he named Mameluke Capital, but his Wall Street talk appears to have gotten ahead of itself. He had failed the Chartered Financial Analyst Level II exam—a helpful credential for Wall Street work—not once but twice, he confided to a female friend. "It seemed like something his heart wasn't really in or he cared to pass," she says. "When I asked him about it, he didn't seem like he was even studying." That didn't make him unique, as an old Buckley school-mate who met Gilbert for drinks at the Stumble Inn, on East 76th Street, two Christmases ago says: "Growing up on the Upper East Side, he's not the only kid to be 30 and still supported by his parents. He seemed like a guy who was a failure to launch." Adds another Buckley alumnus in Gilbert's circle, "When you heard him say, 'Oh yeah, I've got a hedge fund I'm working on,' you were like, Yeah, clearly that's not happening, 'cause having a very social conversation in your backyard is high-pressure for you."

Other than his looks, it was Gilbert's social unease, more than anything, that made an impression. In recent years, many people meeting him for the first time found Gilbert quiet to the point of strange. He would respond to polite questions with awkward silence, have trouble making eye contact, and show obvious discomfort when talking with strangers. Women initially magnetized by his beauty would lose interest after five minutes of labored conversation. He did odd things: this past November, at a cocktail fund-raiser for the Harbor Science & Arts Charter School at the Hotel Americano, in Chelsea, he was the only person wearing a tuxedo. Someone who knew the Gilbert family through the Maidstone describes Tommy as "a little bit off. . . . He just had a blank stare and was never animated. He'd almost sound scripted, which made me think maybe he was on a mood leveler."

He hadn't always been so. At Buckley, he'd been verbose and cocky, a member of the student council and starting running back and captain of the football team at a school that emphasizes athletics. He was, in the words of a former school-mate, "a golden boy." It was after he went to Deerfield, in northwestern Massachusetts, that something changed. "That's when I first started hearing stories about him," another ex-Buckleyite says. Kids who, along with Gilbert, had gone from Buckley to Deerfield began relating anecdotes of how, when they approached their old friend at the boarding school to talk, "he'd literally run away."

At Princeton, he majored in economics, writing a senior thesis titled "The Word Effect: Effects of the Word Content in the Financial Times on Firms' Earnings in the U.K.," but his degree was also not without an asterisk. He had taken six years to graduate, which may or may not have had something to do with an incident on May 8, 2007, four weeks before Gilbert was originally slated to receive his diploma. That afternoon, he was arrested by Princeton Borough Police and charged with possession of cocaine and psychedelic mushrooms and with third-degree aggravated assault for attacking an emergency-first-aid worker who was tending to him, according to the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office, which was unable to provide further details. Gilbert entered New Jersey's pre-trial intervention program, upon the successful completion of which, in September 2008, the assault charge was dismissed. It took him until the spring of 2009 to finally get his degree.

But to the people who'd known him since he was a kid—a group of peers who'd gone to Buckley, summered in the Hamptons, and belonged to the Maidstone—his social anxiety seemed within the bounds of normal, and they knew he could also be affable and game for anything: playing tennis and squash, surfing, going to movies and events and each other's birthday parties. He was a dependable wingman, always up for buying a ticket to someone's benefit, and paying his part of the bill. "People are unfairly making him out to be a spoiled brat," a friend says. "He was the nicest kid in the world and not spoiled at all, but he enjoyed a certain lifestyle that he could not afford." Sometimes he'd even be the one to reach out or put things together. "He was enjoyable to be around," one of those peers, James Bohannon, says.

Still, according to people who socialized with him, Gilbert lacked close friends, and in the summer of 2012, in the Hamptons, Peter Smith befriended him. With their shared Buckley-Maidstone pedigree and love of surfing, Smith took Gilbert under his wing, inviting him to live with him in his rowhouse apartment, in Williamsburg. When others called Gilbert strange, it was Smith who came to his defense. When others left Gilbert off of invitations, it was Smith who went out of his way to include him. It was in his relationship with Peter Smith, however, that Gilbert's unraveling would find a disturbing and violent focus.

At first, being roommates was uneventful. Gilbert's anger, when it surfaced, was directed at his father, friends of Smith's say; he'd regularly rant about how mean and controlling he was. But then Gilbert and Smith went on a surfing trip to Costa Rica, and there Gilbert was erratic, according to these friends, leveling accusations that Smith had been flirting with a young socialite named Lizzy Fraser, a Barnard graduate once dubbed "the ghost of Edie Sedgwick reincarnate" by Gawker, whom Gilbert had dated and remained interested in. ("Peter had zero interest in her," a knowledgeable source says.) Friends say after they returned to Brooklyn, Gilbert's angry behavior continued; he'd shout at his father over the phone and slam doors. Smith, growing alarmed, and having decided to invite his girlfriend to

"HE SEEMED LIKE A GUY WHO WAS A FAILURE TO LAUNCH," AN OLD SCHOOL-MATE SAYS OF TOMMY.

LIES *with* FATHER



The cast of *Fun Home:* Beth Malone, Judy Kuhn, Sydney Lucas, Michael Cerveris, and Emily Skeggs, photographed in New York City.

Too often, coming out entails shock, disapproval, or some combination of the two. Imagine Alison Bechdel's feelings when her mother punctuated her dismay by outing her husband, Bruce, over the phone: "Your father has had affairs. With other men . . . And boys. . . . And then there was the thing with Roy." Alison: "Roy, our babysitter?!" Several months later, Bruce Bechdel was dead, struck by an oncoming Sunbeam Bread truck. (Suicide was never proved, though he had taken to leaving his copy of Camus's *A Happy Death* around the house in the days prior to the accident.)

Alison Bechdel, best known for her eponymous test for works of fiction—to pass which at least two female characters must talk to each other about something other than men—explored her relationship with her father in the 2006 graphic memoir *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic.* (Parallels all but ended at sexual preference: "I was Spartan to my father's Athenian. Modern to his Victorian. Butch to his nelly. Utilitarian to his aesthete.") An inventive musical adaptation by Jeanine Tesori and Lisa Kron comes to the Circle in the Square Theatre April 19 following an Off Broadway run at the Public Theater in 2013.

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To meet the actress who plays **"SMALL" ALISON**, go to VF.COM/APRIL2015.

Onstage, three actresses play Alison, in her "small" (8-year-old), "medium" (19-year-old), and adult (43-year-old) guises. Helen, the subject of Bechdel's 2012 follow-up, *Are You My Mother?,* would, in her own way, accept her daughter's sexuality. Bruce, whose layers of self-denying obfuscation took years for Alison to unpeel, didn't need much prompting: "He seemed strangely pleased to think I was having some kind of orgy."

—MAX CARTER

live with him, asked Gilbert to move out.

Gilbert did not react to the eviction peaceably, by two accounts. Smith was spending a lot of time at a second house in Sagaponack owned by his family, working to launch his start-up in the company of a small team of colleagues and a recently acquired puppy named Rocket, a highly energetic Weimaraner, with which Smith, adhering to the instruction of a dog trainer, was sometimes strict. One day, Gilbert showed up at the house and, a friend says, began "freaking out on" Smith, accusing him of abusing the dog. Not long after, according to several sources, Gilbert showed up at the house again and stole a flagpole from out front; the next day, he returned and impaled the front door with it. The Smiths didn't call the police, because the family was hoping it could be resolved privately.

For months, Smith had been telling family and mutual friends about Gilbert's behavior, and almost invariably they thought he must be exaggerating. "Peter was the only one who had seen the frightening and dangerous side of Tommy, and nobody took it seriously," a source says. "Nobody thought this handsome, well-educated, privileged Princeton man was capable of violence." Gilbert's looks may have gotten him a pass. "If Tommy looked like me," says a friend, "people would have thought he was an insane person fairly quickly."

The skeptics were silenced on the evening of October 3, 2013. That night, both Gilbert and Smith had been invited to attend the premiere of *And After All,* a short film co-produced by their friend Jack Bryan and starring Annabelle Dexter-Jones (and in which Gilbert appeared as an extra), but as Smith emerged onto the street from his building near Bedford Avenue, in Williamsburg, Gilbert stepped out of the darkness and jumped him, Smith later told police, slamming Smith's head repeatedly against the pavement. Afterward, Smith called James Bohannon and texted him a picture of his face. Gilbert had broken his nose and given him a concussion. Bohannon also spoke with Gilbert that night: "I said, 'What are you doing? Peter's our friend. We've known him our whole life. This is where you can make a decision either way.'" Gilbert CONTINUED ON PAGE 194

STYLED BY CHARLES VARENNE; LUCAS'S, MALONE'S, AND SKEGGS'S HAIR BY CHARLIE TAYLOR; CERVERIS'S WIG AND KUHN'S EXTENSIONS AND HAIR BY RICK CAROTO; MAKEUP AND GROOMING BY CYNDIE KOMAROVSKI; SET DESIGN BY ROB STRAUSS STUDIO; PRODUCED ON LOCATION BY DANIELLE REUTHER; FOR FASHION CREDITS AND FURTHER DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK SELIGER



Climbers Tommy Caldwell (left) and Kevin Jorgeson, with a sunlit El Capitan behind them.

PRODUCED ON LOCATION BY ZEPHYR PHOTO PRODUCTIONS; FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS

CAPITAN COURAGEOUS

On January 14, 2015, after 19 days of clinging to the wall of the granite formation called El Capitan, above Yosemite Valley, Tommy Caldwell and Kevin Jorgeson completed the first free climb of one of the world's most difficult routes—the smooth-faced 3,000-foot Dawn Wall. Caldwell is 36 and Jorgeson is 30. Both men are professional climbers. They have sponsorship agreements and tweet while in action—but they are also purists, who sacrifice for the love of nature, solitude, and technical challenge. They are real. The free climbing they performed on El Capitan is a method that uses anchors and ropes only as a security system to check their falls; the upward progress is entirely dependent on grip, courage, and balance. There is a more dangerous method of climbing, known as free soloing, which uses no ropes at all and involves certain death in the event of a fall. Roped-up free climbing allows for attempts on far more difficult routes, like that of the Dawn Wall, where fingertips, toes, and maximum-limit lunges come into play. Falling is an accepted part of the effort: on each pitch, or section, of the climb, you try, you fall, you try again. Between them, Caldwell and Jorgeson took about 70 significant falls, the falls averaging 10 to 25 feet. Caldwell told me the nice part was that the wall was so sheer that they had nothing to hit. But this climb was not a casual affair. Caldwell actively prepared the route for seven years. Thirty percent of the climb took place at night—the cool temperatures allowed for better grip. The resting areas between the pitches were "no-hand stances," or ledges, where Caldwell and Jorgeson could casually stand and relax. I asked Caldwell how wide these ledges were and he said, "In some cases, two inches." —WILLIAM LANGEWIESCHE



PHOTOGRAPH BY JONAS FREDWALL KARLSSON

THE PRINCESS AND THE SPREE

On her most recent Paris shopping trip, in 2012, Saudi princess Maha bint Mohammed bin Ahmad al-Sudairi—who had reportedly tried to stiff some of the city's exclusive boutiques for $20 million in 2009—tried to skip out on a $7 million hotel bill. JAMES REGINATO follows the trail of a royal shopaholic

HEY, BIG SPENDER! A bejeweled Princess Maha al-Sudairi poses at a Paris hotel. *Inset,* the Shangri-La Hotel in Paris, where she stayed for five months.



INSET © AGE FOTOSTOCK/ALAMY



It's an old gambit—slipping out of a hotel in the dead of night to dodge the bill. But it's a bit tricky when you have an entourage of 60 people, a balance of more than $7 million, and a fleet of limousines and other vehicles waiting to collect you and your mountains of bags. That was the situation at 3:30 A.M. on May 31, 2012, when Princess Maha bint Mohammed bin Ahmad al-Sudairi reportedly attempted to make something of a run for it at Paris's five-star Shangri-La Hotel, in the 16th Arrondissement, where she and her retinue had occupied 41 rooms for five months. After a tense standoff that involved calls to high-ranking diplomats and officials, she was allowed to leave, whereupon she checked into the nearby Royal Monceau, owned by Qatar, a friendly neighbor of Saudi Arabia.

Perhaps Princess Maha thought she could slip away because just three years earlier in Paris, according to press accounts, she almost succeeded in ducking out on a $20 million tab during an epic shopping spree through the boutiques of the Avenue Montaigne, the Place Vendôme, and elsewhere. When it came time to ring up her purchases, Princess Maha reportedly shunned the usual payment methods, instead having a minion hand the merchant an embossed document stating, "Payment to follow"—a very fancy I.O.U. At some point, however, the checks stopped going out. "She was a very good customer for eight years, but then simply stopped paying," the proprietor of the lingerie store O Caprices de Lili told reporters in June 2009, when she was awaiting nearly $100,000 in payment. The owner of a leisurewear store called Key Largo claimed that he had been stiffed for almost $125,000 worth of merchandise.

Toward the end of that 2009 stay—this time at the George V—at least one of the approximately 30 vendors to whom she reportedly owed money spent days camping out in the lobby of the posh hotel in hopes of receiving payment, before filing a civil claim. In spite of those mountainous debts, her departure from the George V appears to have been unimpeded. The hotel is owned by her cousin Prince Alwaleed bin Talal (net worth: $30 billion), and, according to some reports, her debts were settled by officials from the Saudi Embassy. But her brother-in-law at the time, King Abdullah (who died on January 23), was said to be unamused by Maha's scandalous behavior, and, on her return to Saudi Arabia, reportedly had her confined to her palace.

Maha, in her early 50s, was the third of Nayef bin Abdulaziz al-Saud's three wives. The couple—who were also cousins—were together some three decades before parting ways. They had five children, now ranging in age from 22 to 30. In 2009, Nayef (a half-brother of King Abdullah's) had been second in line for the throne—and at times Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler as a result of the poor health of both the king and the then crown prince, Nayef's brother Sultan. Nayef was named crown prince in October 2011 following Sultan's death; by early 2012 he and Maha had divorced. Ailing from diabetes, he died on June 16, 2012, at age 78.

In December 2011, Maha defied the royal edict and "escaped" back to Paris, according to *The Telegraph.* Her troublesome 2012 checkout from the Shangri-La coincided closely with the death of her ex-husband and, according to some, the total loss of Abdullah's favor. "The king was really over her at this point—he wanted nothing to do with her," said a Middle Eastern woman who lives in Europe and knows the princess.

It was even more arduous for vendors to collect this time around. In March 2013, a judge in Nanterre, west of Paris, ordered the seizure of the contents of two storage units packed with Maha's 2012 purchases, which were to be auctioned off to repay creditors. The stash reportedly included clothes, hats, handbags, jewelry, artworks, bathing suits, designer eyeglasses, cartons of cigarettes, gold-plated serving dishes, about a thousand pairs of women's shoes, and some framed photographs of the princess posing in a tiara and a carnival mask.

One of the creditors was the luxury-services company that had provided her with chauffeurs and cars—almost 30 of them every day, including two Rolls-Royce Phantoms. It was left with almost $400,000 of unpaid bills, a company official told a reporter from the Paris daily *Le Parisien*. "We took the risk of dealing with her, because this was an attractive contract for us, but the whole thing has turned out to be disastrous," he said. "The procedure for getting reimbursed is obviously going to be long, very long."

So, the results of a recent fact-finding trip to Paris are somewhat curious. "The bill was paid within 48 hours" of the covert exodus, a press representative of the Shangri-La told me. "The chapter is closed. It's not something the hotel really wants to discuss." "All is fine," said a manager at Key Largo, the sportswear shop that had to go to court to collect $125,000 in 2009. "The bill was paid."

Problematic as this Saudi customer was, nobody wants to lose that market, clearly. Paris has long been a favored destination of wealthy Saudis. They congregate mostly in the Eighth Arrondissement—where the good shopping is (i.e., Avenue Montaigne). Perhaps to stay in close proximity to the merchandise, their favored hotels in Paris are also here—the George V or the Plaza Athénée (owned by the Sultan of Brunei). "The Ritz was never their thing," says one Parisian grande dame, who is a

MAHA'S STASH INCLUDED HANDBAGS, JEWELRY, ARTWORKS, CIGARETTES, AND 1,000 PAIRS OF SHOES.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HELOISE BERGMAN/REX USA (5), FROM BESTIMAGE (7), © JEFFREY BLACKLER/ALAMY (2), © EYE UBIQUITOUS/ALAMY (3, LEFT), © EYE UBIQUITOUS/CORBIS (3, RIGHT), © SERGIO PITAMITZ/ALAMY (6), © PHILIPPE WOJAZER/REUTERS/CORBIS (4)















TAB HUNTER

(1) Princess Maha at a Paris hotel. **(2)** The Dior boutique in Place Vendôme. **(3)** Street signs from two popular shopping spots. **(4)** Bags from Hermès. **(5)** Le Royal Monceau hotel, where the princess stayed after leaving the Shangri-La. **(6)** The Chanel boutique in Place Vendôme. **(7)** The entrance to the Royal Monceau.

friend of the royal family and characterizes Saudi fashion taste as flashy and accessories-oriented: "They tend to like gimmicky things—Vuitton or Chanel. They are not very Hermès. The quantities of shoes they buy you cannot imagine. But if you ever see their soles, when they cross their legs, they are always like new. Because they never walk on the street."

Shoes, as well as bags, are top female purchases, because in Saudi Arabia, under women's abayas, these are the only articles visible to others.

According to Maha's well-connected Middle Eastern acquaintance, the princess's debts were likely settled—out of a wish, again, to avoid family scandal—by one of her late ex-husband's *full* brothers, possibly Salman, who succeeded Abdullah as king in January 2015.

Maha herself, meanwhile, has been grounded in her palace again—firmly, this time, said the grande dame. "She had no permission to leave the country," she adds. (Efforts to reach Princess Maha for comment for this story were unsuccessful.)

In Saudi Arabia's ruling al-Saud dynasty, where King Abdulaziz (who founded the state, in 1932) fathered some 45 sons with at least 22 wives, there is a crucial distinction between half- and full brothers.

Salman and Nayef were two of seven sons born to Abdulaziz with his favorite wife, Hassa bint Ahmad al-Sudairi, of the powerful Sudairi family from Saudi Arabia's central plateau region of Nejd, where the fundamentalist Wahhabi ideology emerged some 300 years ago. According to some accounts, Hassa al-Sudairi may have been as young as 13 when she was chosen to marry the future king. After a few years, Abdulaziz divorced her to take other wives—Muslim men are permitted to have only four wives at a time—but he soon married her again. They had 12 children together and remained married until his death, in 1953. Their sons—known as the Sudairi Seven—formed the largest bloc of full brothers in the royal family and thus have wielded enormous power. The late King Abdullah (who had no full brothers) is said to have disliked them and attempted to limit their power.

But with Salman now on the throne, the Sudairis are back on top. One of Nayef's 10 children, Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, 55—son of Nayef's second wife, Al Jawhara—has recently been named deputy crown prince.

Money still clearly gushes through the family. In May 2013, Maha's youngest child, Prince Fahd, then 21, organized a three-day graduation party at Disneyland Paris for 60 friends that reportedly cost about $20 million. (Eighty dancers were hired to create spectacular shows, and Main Street was transformed into a Parisian boulevard, while the park was opened early in the morning and after hours, until two A.M., for his party. He reportedly invited Mickey and Minnie to come for a ride on his jet.) Excess is clearly a family tradition.

Originally built as a palace for Prince Roland Bonaparte, Napoleon's grandnephew, the Shangri-La is among Paris's most expensive hotels. (Rooms start at $750, and suites can cost as much as $23,000 a night.) A fusion of French Empire and contemporary luxe-minimalist décor, it prides itself on its impeccable service. Little of which, it seems, Princess Maha availed herself of, in spite of her $7 million bill. "She brought all her own people," her Middle Eastern acquaintance said. "Drivers, maids, cooks . . . "

"We almost never saw her," a doorman at the Shangri-La whispered to me. "She lived in the night. She maybe came out in the daytime a couple of times in six months. . . . She'd be surrounded by 10 people rushing her into one of her cars." According to other sources, the princess's staff also included waiters, hairdressers, secretaries, bodyguards—and numerous people to carry her packages.

Such a nocturnal lifestyle is fairly common among rich and poor alike in Saudi Arabia, where daytime temperatures can be blistering. Therefore, some of Paris's most exclusive emporiums kept late hours. The huge Louis Vuitton flagship on the Champs-Élysées, for example, reportedly reopened at two A.M. just for her. At one point during her shopping there she required sustenance and had bags of takeout hamburgers brought in. (Dior, Dolce & Gabbana, Chaumet, and Victoria Casal are some of the other shops she was known to patronize.)

While there is no doubt that Princess Maha is a world-class shopaholic, she displayed little discrimination. "She shopped everywhere, from Hermès to Zara and anywhere in between," the acquaintance told me.

Indeed, Key Largo, where she dropped that $125,000, is a small discount boutique located in a tacky mall near Trocadéro that sells downscale sneakers, underwear, and jeans.

She hoovered up virtually everything in her path, wherever she went. According to the acquaintance, after Princess Maha took an excursion to Geneva she needed four trucks to haul back her purchases—and she bought a Lamborghini and a Ferrari, despite the fact that she doesn't drive. (Women are not permitted to do so in Saudi Arabia.)

According to that acquaintance, who visited her hotel suite, many of Princess Maha's packages were apparently never even opened: "There were rooms and rooms full of bags and boxes. Everywhere you looked there were boxes and bags, almost all unopened."

"When I saw her in her suite she was wearing pajamas" rather than the carloads of couture she was amassing. "There was candy everywhere in her suites," this person added. "And she brought with her five or six people to work in the kitchen, because it had to be staffed 24 hours a day."

THEY'LL NEVER BE ROYAL'S Princess Maha's extensive purchases, in a storage facility in Clichy-la-Garenne, outside Paris, awaiting confiscation by court officers in April 2013.



FROM BESTIMAGE

"THERE IS A CHARM AND A SWEETNESS TO MAHA, BUT SHE'S A LOST SOUL."

In spite of her history of utter excess, Princess Maha emerges as a strangely sympathetic figure as you learn more about her.

"There is a charm and a sweetness to her," said the Middle Eastern acquaintance I spoke with. "But she's a lost soul. She's uneducated; you know, they want to marry these girls off as early as they can. Then they have nothing to do but shop. It makes for stupid women, and it's a real problem for the country—it means men are making all the decisions."

A lively woman, Maha is said to be passionate about music, singing, and love poetry, which she used to like to write—big no-nos for females in Saudi Arabia's ultraconservative Wahhabi culture. And one of the staunchest enforcers of its adherence to that code was her husband.

As interior minister since 1975, he was in charge of the kingdom's intrusive intelligence and security agencies, even wielding a large measure of control over its fanatical religious police. An uncompromising conservative, he disapproved of King Abdullah's relatively modest social reforms and was known to imprison and execute Saudis who opposed the regime, according to author Karen Elliott House in *On Saudi Arabia: Its People, Past, Religion, Fault Lines—and Future.*

Yet, at least in the earlier years of his marriage to Maha, he doted on her. "He adored her, indulged her, gave her everything she wanted," said the Middle Eastern acquaintance, who described him as "the Antichrist."

"Anybody would go crazy being married to him," this person added.

Somewhere along the way, the marriage faltered. In the early 2000s, according to the French newsmagazine *Le Nouvel Observateur,* rumors circulated that she had become friendly with a Saudi crooner, Khalid Abdul Rahman. Known as "the lover of the night," he supposedly set some of the poems she wrote to music—to the extreme chagrin of the Saudi religious establishment.

Saudi Arabia's women continue to be one of the most repressed female populations in the world. They are almost never allowed out of their houses without a male guardian. Even the main activity that wealthy women are supposedly allowed to enjoy—shopping—is highly circumscribed. As sales attendants in Saudi Arabia are all men, women cannot try clothes on in the shops, so they must take all garments to the shopping-mall restrooms, which are attended by women. "I presume this is what makes international shopping appealing to Saudi women—the ability to be normal at some level," said House—though "normal" is not exactly the word anybody would use to describe the Parisian shopping expeditions of Princess Maha al-Sudairi. With Salman running the kingdom now, there is even speculation that Maha might emerge from disfavor and find herself more mobile again. Watch out, Avenue Montaigne! □

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PATRIOT GAMES



Pablo Schreiber, Jack Black, Tim Robbins, and Aasif Mandvi, of *The Brink*, photographed on the roof of the Nate Starkman Building, in Los Angeles.

When faced with potential global annihilation, what can you do but laugh? So argues HBO's upcoming comedy series *The Brink,* anyway. Premiering this summer, the series, from brothers Roberto and Kim Benabib and executive producer Jerry Weintraub, stars Tim Robbins as a skirt-chasing, booze-swilling secretary of state trying to stave off World War III with the unlikely help of a sleazy foreign-service peon played by Jack Black. Also on board are *Orange Is the New Black* favorite Pablo Schreiber, playing a navy pilot who deals drugs to make ends meet, and *The Daily Show* vet Aasif Mandvi as a sardonic embassy worker. It's a motley crew tasked with ensuring that a Pakistani military coup doesn't tip the world into chaos, which could make for a pretty tense, grim series. But instead *The Brink* keeps everything moving with antic zip and dark humor.

Inspired by "macro comedies" such as *Dr. Strangelove,* which "dealt with the world" rather than with intimate, interpersonal stuff, Roberto Benabib says *The Brink* "might be heightened comically, but it's very real. The situation in Pakistan is the Pentagon's worst nightmare, and they are gaming it out." The show spins that scary reality in a riotous, profane direction, reminiscent of HBO's hit political comedy *Veep,* telling a story of messy people trying to do a little good despite themselves. "All the leads are definitely flawed people. I think that's a good arena to play in," says Schreiber. That inevitable human folly was evident in the behind-the-scenes intrigue, too. "In the pilot that I read, my character was described as a young Robert Downey Jr.," Black tells us. "I said, 'You know, I don't think I can pull that off, guys.' And they were very embarrassed because I think they meant to delete that before sending it over to me." Despite that minor calamity, it all worked out in the end. As we hope it will for *The Brink*'s ragtag band of accidental heroes. —RICHARD LAWSON

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF LIPSKY



MISSIONS ACCOMPLISHED
John Whitehead, photographed in New York City on November 11, 2014, three months before his death.

John Whitehead

On D-day, John Whitehead helped lead the first wave of the Normandy invasion. He never stopped answering his country's call, until his death last month. Tracing Whitehead's road from the navy to Wall Street to Washington, MICHAEL BLOOMBERG marks the success of his friend's last great mission: bringing Lower Manhattan back from the devastation of 9/11. Photograph by ANNIE LEIBOVITZ



John Whitehead was one of the greats of the Greatest Generation. Whenever his country came calling, he answered without hesitation.

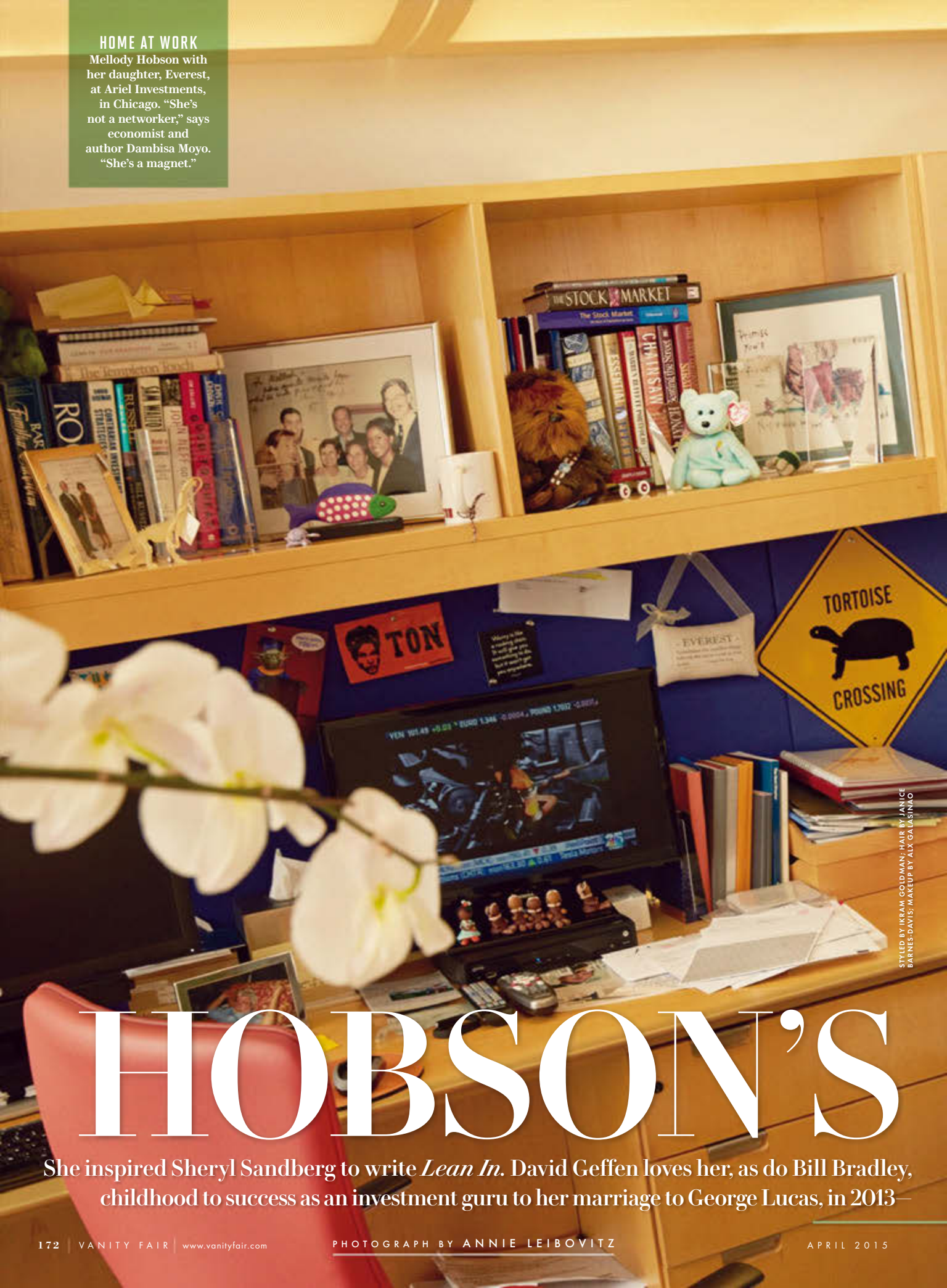
Before I knew John, I knew of him. When I first started working on Wall Street, in the 1960s, John was at Goldman Sachs, solidifying his status as one of the legends of finance. He hadn't come from money: his family suffered through the Great Depression, like so many others. He enlisted in the navy during World War II, and on the U.S.S. *Thomas Jefferson* he helped lead the first wave of the D-day invasion of Normandy. At the battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, in the Pacific, John Whitehead was there.

John's sense of public duty never left him. He helped create a culture of philanthropy on Wall Street, supporting those in need and serving civic causes too many to name here. In the 1980s, after retiring as co-chairman from Goldman Sachs, he served as deputy secretary of state under George Shultz. So much for retirement.

When I was first elected mayor of New York City, John once again answered the call of duty. It was barely two months after the attacks of 9/11, and we were a city in mourning. Many doubted whether Lower Manhattan would ever be able to rebound. Governor George Pataki asked John to lead the newly formed Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, which was charged with guiding the revitalization of the area, including the rebuilding of the World Trade Center site, one of the most complicated construction projects ever undertaken. John, of course, agreed. And he also agreed to become the first chairman of the National September 11 Memorial & Museum.

It was an honor to work with John on a mission—bringing Lower Manhattan back and building a beautiful and powerful memorial and museum—that was of critical importance to both our city and our nation. Today, the neighborhood is full of life, with new homes, schools, and businesses. One World Trade Center opened its doors to tenants—including this magazine—this winter, and the National September 11 Memorial & Museum (on whose board John served until his death, in February, at age 92) has already welcomed two million visitors from around the world.

John was a true patriot whose life was defined by his integrity and sense of service. Our country was lucky to have him—and I was very lucky to call him a friend. □



HOME AT WORK
Mellody Hobson with her daughter, Everest, at Ariel Investments, in Chicago. "She's not a networker," says economist and author Dambisa Moyo. "She's a magnet."

STYLED BY IKRAM GOLDMAN; HAIR BY JANICE BARNES-DAVIS; MAKEUP BY ALX GALASINAO

HOBSON'S

She inspired Sheryl Sandberg to write *Lean In.* David Geffen loves her, as do Bill Bradley, childhood to success as an investment guru to her marriage to George Lucas, in 2013—

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNIE LEIBOVITZ



CHOICE

Howard Schultz, and Oprah Winfrey. Mellody Hobson's life—from her tough Chicago has shattered stereotypes of every kind. BETHANY MCLEAN charts her rise

Mellody Hobson has a long list of prominent fans whose adoration of her borders on adulation.

"She has a grace and graciousness about her that is singular," Jeffrey Katzenberg, the C.E.O. of DreamWorks Animation, tells me. "She is remarkably unique. She's a stunning person. I get a little nervous talking about her because the words are so flowery. But it's truly how I feel about her."

Sheryl Sandberg, the Facebook chief operating officer, who first met Hobson some five years ago because they were both board members at Eve Ensler's V-Day organization, which combats violence against women, credits a comment Hobson made with inspiring her to write her best-seller, *Lean In.* "She said she wanted to be unapologetically black and unapologetically a woman," Sandberg says, recalling that the comment helped her move past trying to make her gender difference fade into the background. "My life was altered by meeting her, and that's not something I say lightly," Sandberg adds. "She is such a big part of my path taken. I think she does that for everyone."

"What can I say?" says Howard Schultz, the chairman and C.E.O. of Starbucks. "When I think of her, I think of grace. She's the most unique individual. I love Mellody Hobson."

"Payne Stewart had W.W.J.D. [What Would Jesus Do?]," Dambisa Moyo, the Oxford- and Harvard-trained economist and author, tells me. "I have W.W.M.D."

Hobson is the president of a well-respected Chicago money-management firm called Ariel Investments. She's a board member at Estée Lauder, Starbucks (where she chairs the audit-and-compliance committee), and DreamWorks Animation (where she chairs the entire board). For many years she was a contributor to ABC's *Good Morning America;* she now works for CBS News and is on the boards of too many philanthropic organizations to list. And while she's not a household name—at least not yet—she is at the hub of an eclectic group of people who are.

In June 2013, Hobson, who is 45, married George Lucas, the 70-year-old filmmaker who sold his company, Lucasfilm, to Walt Disney in 2012 for more than $4 billion. In August, the couple welcomed a daughter, Everest Hobson Lucas, who was born via gestational surrogate, to the world. (Lucas had adopted three children previously: Amanda, Kate, and Jett, all now young adults.) Last June, Lucas announced that the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, which will showcase "moving images—from illustration to cinema to the digital media of the future," would be built in Chicago. Although the project has faced controversy, with the *Chicago Tribune* comparing aspects of the design to Jabba the Hutt and Lucas now saying he may be forced to take it elsewhere, the potential change to the lakefront is a monument to Hobson's influence—and that she can exert that kind of influence is no surprise to those who know her, including another longtime friend and fan, Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel. "On one level, it is shocking, it does surprise you, but then you know Mellody, and it's not surprising at all," he says.

Because here's the thing about Hobson's remarkable life and all of this extravagant praise: it is earned.

Ariel's offices in Chicago's Aon Center building are on the 29th floor, where the light reflected from Lake Michigan illuminates the serene space. One conference room is named for Warren Buffett, whose investing style Ariel emulates. In it, there's a picture of Buffett with Hobson and John Rogers, Ariel's C.E.O., who has been Hobson's boss, mentor, and partner for some 25 years. Along one hallway, there are pictures of President Obama, who worked out of Ariel's offices in 2008 when his permanent offices were being established. There are lots of tortoises, because the tortoise in Aesop's fable is the slow and steady one who wins the race, and that's Ariel's style. And there are hourglasses, which Hobson says demonstrate the firm's thoughtfulness about how time is used. To help Hobson manage her time, the firm turned a conference room adjoining her office into a nursery for Everest.

One morning, she's wearing a fitted, black, flowered Dolce & Gabbana dress, accented with a pink Lucite collar, that she describes as a "cheapie" from Ikram, the Chicago boutique run by her longtime friend Ikram Goldman. (Ikram describes Hobson's distinctive style as "fearless.") She's also wearing a sleek black Jawbone, which documents that she got out of bed at 4:11 A.M. and was exercising by 4:18 A.M. But Hobson pulls out her phone to show me that that's not quite accurate: she was actually sending e-mails by 3:50 A.M. This is standard for her, even though Hobson, who runs all parts of the firm outside of research and investing, travels constantly. "George says flying is the new smoking," she tells me. "We



PHOTOGRAPHS: TOP LEFT, © DONNA NEWMAN PHOTOGRAPHY; BOTTOM LEFT, FROM GERTRUDE & MABEL PHOTOGRAPHY; BOTTOM RIGHT, © STUART RODGERS PHOTOGRAPHY

"I WAS DESPERATE TO UNDERSTAND MONEY," SAYS HOBSON, "DESPERATE FOR FINANCIAL SECURITY."









A NEW HOPE

Clockwise from top left: **George Lucas and Hobson on their wedding day, June 22, 2013; Warren Buffett and Hobson; Hobson early in her career; Lucas, Hobson, and Everest, May 2014.**

will look back and say, 'Oh, why did we do this to ourselves?' But where my clients are, I go."

Dick Parsons, the former head of Time Warner, who is another longtime friend and admirer, describes Hobson as having a pixie-like quality, and with her wide brown eyes and cropped hair she does. But in person, she is also regal. She punctuates her stories with a hearty laugh that is genuine but not spontaneous. There is a formality to her. She can be warm, but there's a cool, watchful quality about her that can turn steely. She is the definition of a doer. "When people look at all the things I do, they say it's overwhelming, but I don't feel overwhelmed," she says. "I get it done. I'm very organized, and it's all tied together."

Hobson's commitment to work is one of her signature traits. "The one thing I knew I could do is outwork everyone," she likes to say. A college roommate at Princeton, Ann Davis Vaughan, who is a former *Wall Street Journal* reporter and now runs her own research firm, says that she and her husband visited Hobson at her Chicago apartment on the day of her and Lucas's wedding party. Hobson chatted with them for 45 minutes or so—and then excused herself to go to the office because she hadn't yet finished Ariel's quarterly letter to investors. "She literally went to the office on the afternoon of her own wedding party!" says Vaughan.

Ivy-Bound

If Hobson's life seems ridiculously charmed, she wasn't born in a place that made that inevitable, or even likely. She is the youngest child of a single mother, Dorothy Ashley, who had Mellody more than two decades after the birth of her first child. Hobson's father was not present in her life. "Dorth," as Hobson sometimes called her mother, was a hardworking entrepreneur who fixed up and rented out, and later sold, condominiums. (She passed away last year.) But she didn't have a hard enough heart to be a good businesswoman. She couldn't evict people who couldn't pay their rent, recalls Hobson's sister Pat Hamel. And when she began selling condos, she was often penalized by redlining. That, plus her own extravagance—both sisters recall their mother buying Easter dresses instead of paying the phone bill—resulted in frequent evictions and moves between Chicago's relatively wealthier North Side and the grittier South Side, where they'd sometimes heat water for baths on hot plates. "Even though I will never be evicted again, I am haunted by those times and still work relentlessly," Hobson wrote in her chapter in Sandberg's *Lean In for Graduates.* "When I think of my career and why I leaned in, it comes down to basic survival."

Dorothy Ashley was a strange mixture of "brutal pragmatism and optimism," says Hobson, who remembers returning at the age of seven from a birthday party where she was the only black child. "How did they treat you?" her mother asked. "Because they won't always treat you well." But her mother also instilled in her daughter both confidence and independence. "My mom would say, 'You have a birthday party to go to? Well, you can't go unless you've planned how to get there and how to get a present.' She wouldn't do that for me. I found my own orthodontist, my own high school. I set up interviews and did college trips. Despite her incredible concern and caring, my mom didn't have the capacity for that. It was outside her experience, and she knew I was on top of it," says Hobson.

"Mellody made the decisions for her whole life," says Hamel, who also remembers that her sister never got a spanking and that her family always believed she would be successful. "She knew what she wanted to do and how she wanted to do it." Hamel also says that Hobson was "very, very thoughtful about her future and about the kind of people she allowed in her life."

In high school, at Chicago's Saint Ignatius, Hobson recalls, she was a "joiner." "I wasn't with the cool kids, but I could be," she says. "I was accepted." Her friend Peter Thompson, a self-described jock whose grandfather is Richard J. Daley, the former longtime mayor of Chicago, says that, while Hobson was more of a nerd in school, he got to know her on a retreat. "What's notable about Mellody is that she's always one of the more earnest people in the room," he says.

Hobson does not try to hide the fact that she tries. Her fifth-grade teacher, Miss Falbo, would record weekly spelling tests by having students score their neighbor's exam and read the grade aloud. "If everyone got 100 percent, then each person in the entire class would get two Girl Scout cookies," Hobson remembers. "But if one person missed, there would be no cookies for anyone." And the words were like "concatenation." She pauses in her story to define the word for me: the linking of events in a chain. Then she recalls the moment Miss Falbo said, "'Hobson, 90 percent.' I missed a word. I'm mortified. I'm praying, I need someone else to miss or I'm toast at recess. They get to the last person [alphabetically], Adam Yaseen, and no one else has missed. Miss Falbo looks at me. 'Hobson, I'm not going to punish the whole class because of your incompetence,' she says. 'You can step into the hallway while we enjoy our Girl Scout cookies.' The door was 500 feet away, and I'm thinking to myself, Don't cry, don't cry. I'm looking into the room through the glass door at everyone eating their Girl Scout cookies, and I say to myself, 'Never again. I will never, ever fail at something related to school ever again.' It unleashed my obsession."

Her stellar academic record attracted offers from top colleges, including Harvard. She was going to go there, but decided at the last minute on Princeton instead. That decision began with a recruiter, John Rogers, who is 11 years older than Hobson, and who founded Ariel when he was just 24. Rogers had attended Princeton, where he played basketball with Craig Robinson, Michelle Obama's brother. His parents, John Rogers Sr., who was a Tuskegee Airman, and Jewel Lafontant, met the first day of law school at the University of Chicago, where she was the first African-American female graduate. She also became the first female deputy solicitor general of the United States.

Rogers's father sparked his interest in the stock market by giving him stock certificates in lieu of toys starting when he was 12. After working as a stockbroker for a few years, he raised money from friends and family—including from the parents of future Obama

"I'VE NEVER SEEN GEORGE [LUCAS] THIS HAPPY, INCLUDING THE NIGHT . . . *STAR WARS* OPENED."

THE WAR *at* HOME

presidential adviser Valerie Jarrett, who were neighbors—and launched Ariel. "I grew up in a world where a strong, dynamic woman could achieve anything," says Rogers today. "And when I saw Mellody, I saw this bright, brilliant person who could indeed achieve anything."

Through Rogers, Hobson was invited to a business persons' breakfast with basketball great Bill Bradley, then a U.S. senator from New Jersey. It was the beginning of a remarkably formative friendship. "We started talking, and I don't remember the name of one other person at the breakfast," says Bradley today.

That moment highlights another of Hobson's gifts. "Someone once told me that the secret to success is being the person who other people want to see succeed," says Parsons. "It's more important than talent, brains, or luck. And Mellody is the person others want to see succeed."



Police arrest demonstrators at a "Days of Rage" protest, in Chicago, on October 11, 1969, organized by the Weathermen, a radical offshoot of Students for a Democratic Society.

To her friends in college, Hobson seemed like a normal kid. But she was preternaturally aware. In a letter to her sister Pat at the start of freshman year, she talked about her "incredible day" spent volunteering at a Princeton nursing home. "It really made me think about how scary it is to age, (especially for mommie) and how unfair we as Americans are to the people who raised us and who have practically built this country by hand," she wrote. She added, "Talking with the elderly also does wonders for my communication skills." And she wrote this to her sister, who had helped raise her. "Although I don't have much (yet) what I do have is yours."

After college, she returned to Ariel, where she had done a summer internship. "I was desperate to understand money, desperate for financial security," says Hobson. "I felt like financial security would be the biggest gift I could ever have, ever." She became an unofficial chief of staff to Rogers, a role in which she'd challenge herself by seeing if she could anticipate his answer—and then by seeing if she had a better one. In 2000, Rogers, who oversees the investing side of the business, named her president. She hustled. Laurence Kandel, a vice president at Obermeyer Asset Management in Colorado, says he'd see her on the sales circuit, drumming up business. "She's at things I wouldn't expect, things where she is by far the most senior person in the room, and she's there doing the hand-to-hand combat," he says.

Hobson also became both politically and philanthropically engaged at a remarkably early age. In the mid-1990s, she and Rogers founded Ariel Community Academy, a public school on the South Side of Chicago that includes course work on financial literacy. In 2002, Ariel launched the Black Corporate Directors Conference to bring together board members from Fortune 500 companies. Hobson was an early supporter of Barack Obama's, CONTINUED ON PAGE 192

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID FENTON/GETTY IMAGES

In this new age of terrorism, "people have completely forgotten that in 1972 we had over nineteen hundred domestic bombings in the United States. . . . Buildings getting bombed, policemen getting killed," retired F.B.I. agent Max Noel told Bryan Burrough for his new book, *Days of Rage,* about the bureau and the radical underground bombers of the 1970s. Burrough, who leapt to fame as the co-author of *Barbarians at the Gate,* has written about the F.B.I. once before: in 2004's *Public Enemies* (made into a movie of the same name starring Johnny Depp) he chronicled J. Edgar Hoover's war against the gangsters of the 1930s. With that book, the challenge was getting a story that few of the characters were alive to tell. For *Days of Rage,* many of the subjects—both the homegrown bombers and the F.B.I. agents pursuing them—are still alive, but Burrough had to persuade them to come out of the shadows to share memories that were often shocking and painful. "For a lot of graying underground veterans, finally being able to discuss the courthouses and skyscrapers they bombed, or in some cases the policemen they attempted to kill, turned out to be cathartic," says Burrough. "Others have forgotten, but they haven't. Many are still trying to make sense of it today." Five years in the making, *Days of Rage* is bound to alter the conversation about this crucial topic of our time. —DOUG STUMPF



SALZBURG, WHEN IT SIZZLES

Karl Lagerfeld, the ageless creative director of Chanel, likes to deadpan that he has lots of class, but it's working class. And, boy, does he work. It's what he enjoys doing most, apart from being with Choupette, his Sacré de Birmanie cat, who has two nannies and some 44,000 followers on Instagram.

Since 2002 the fashion house has expanded to include a collection, Métiers d'Art, halfway between couture and ready-to-wear, that incorporates the work of Europe's most cherished artisans. To show each new line, Lagerfeld chooses a location that has played a major role in the history of the company. For 2015 he put the spotlight on Salzburg, Austria. "I spent many summers there in the past, and I liked the idea of a place I knew so well," he says. "Plus I needed the connection with the jacket." By which he means the story that in the 50s Gabrielle Chanel was visiting a former lover, Baron Hubert von Pantz, who owned the Schloss Mittersill, then one of Austria's poshest hotels. In the hotel elevator she noticed the lift boy's fitted four-pocket jacket, and this inspired her to create the company's iconic staple, the Chanel jacket. Lucky thing she didn't take the stairs that day.

For the new Métiers collection, Lagerfeld puts his own spin on the Chanel jacket, integrating it with another Austrian staple, the loden jacket. Throughout the collection he plays with Tyrolean elements, always giving them a personal twist, such as making lederhosen out of denim instead of leather.

Lagerfeld is never literal. "We take the best and forget the rest," he says. His romantic Austrian reverie has ribbons, ruffles, and lace, with details such as butterflies made out of feathers as light as air, and embroidery as vibrant as a field of wildflowers, but also modern proportions and cuts. To look at the clothes is to hear music, say, the glorious waltzes of Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*.

To show the collection in a typical Chanel extravaganza, Lager-

HAIR PRODUCTS BY ORIBE; MAKEUP PRODUCTS BY CHANEL; HAIR BY SAM MCKNIGHT; MAKEUP BY TOM PECHEUX; PRODUCED ON LOCATION BY PRODUCTION BERLIN; FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS

PHOTOGRAPH BY SEBASTIAN FAENA



Jeanne Cadieu, Ronja Furrer, Nadine Strittmatter, Magda Laguinge, and Soo Joo Park at Schloss Leopoldskron, Salzburg, Austria.

ALL CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES BY CHANEL, FROM THE MÉTIERS D'ART PARIS-SALZBURG 2014–15 COLLECTION.

feld chose Schloss Leopoldskron, the 18th-century rococo palace commissioned by Prince Archbishop of Salzburg Leopold Anton Freiherr von Firmian and later the home of Max Reinhardt, the visionary theater and film director who co-founded the Salzburg Festival. The happening, which took place this past December, also included a film, *Reincarnation*, directed by Lagerfeld, starring Cara Delevingne and Pharrell Williams, who also wrote the lyrics and music for it (the plan was to repeat the extravaganza in New York at the end of March).

With World War II on its way, Reinhardt, a Jew, fled to Hollywood, where he re-established his career, directing a theatrical production at the Hollywood Bowl of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with Olivia de Havilland and Mickey Rooney, which he then made into a now classic movie. The 2015 Métiers d'Art was Lagerfeld's way of honoring Reinhardt, but you can bet that neither Max nor Mickey ever imagined denim lederhosen. –INGRID SISCHY

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To see more **PHOTOS** from the shoot, go to VF.COM/APRIL2015.

Sometime next year, despite a fatal test-flight crash last fall, commercial passenger service to space could become a reality. More than 700 people have paid up to $250,000 for a ride on Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic. Can he guarantee a safe landing? WILLIAM LANGEWIESCHE details a risky quest to sell extreme excursions and expensive thrills

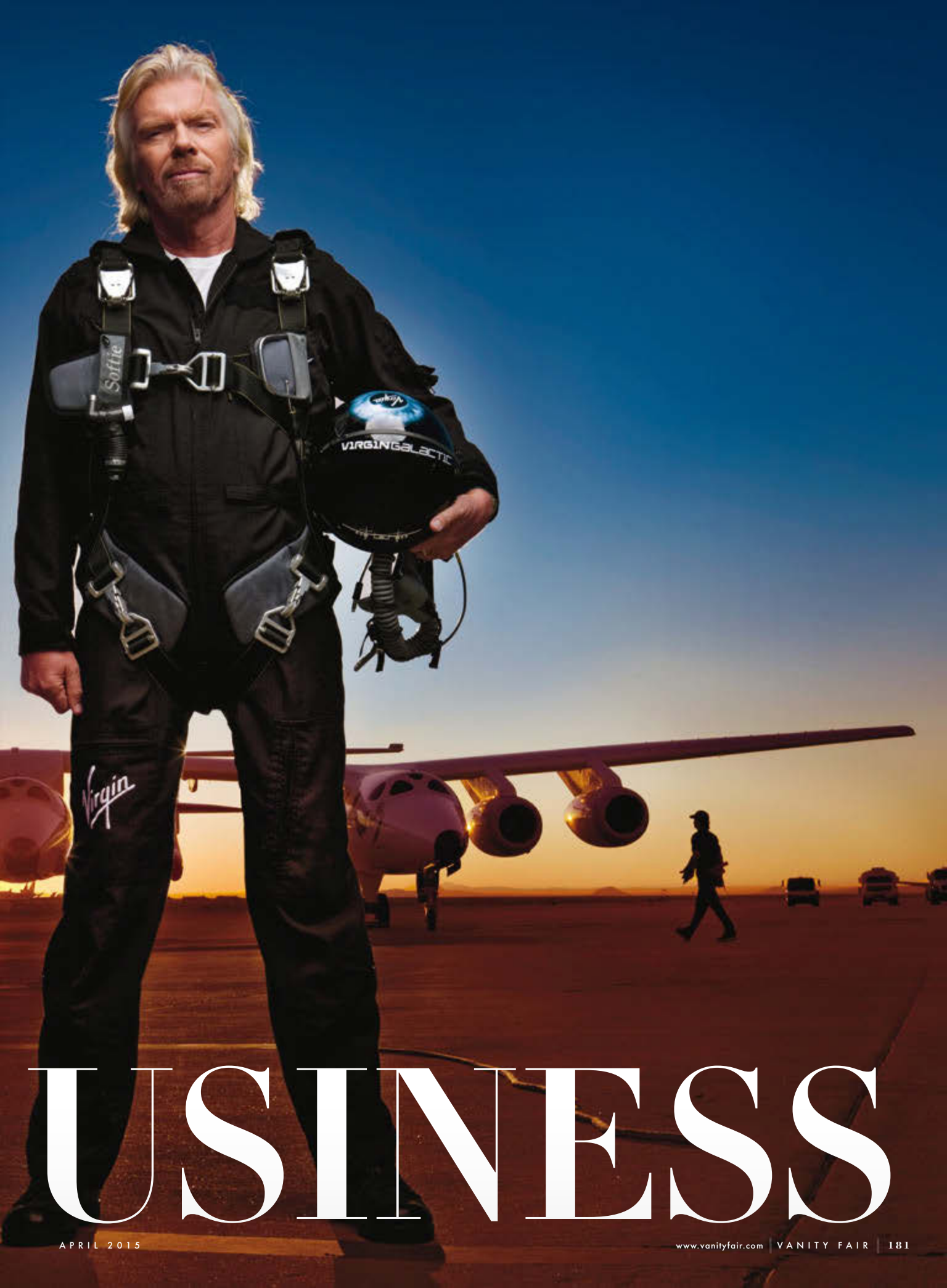


FOR REAL? Richard Branson in Mojave, California, in 2010. Behind him, SpaceShipTwo hangs from the twin-fuselage mother ship, WhiteKnightTwo.

RISKY B

PHOTOGRAPH BY JONAS FREDWALL KARLSSON

FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS



USINESS

I. The Unthinkable

Commercial passenger service to space is a difficult proposition. To succeed, it has to contend with the pull of gravity, violent rocket-propelled accelerations, heavy vibrations, supersonic speeds and shock waves, vertical climbs, the lethality of the outside environment, and the problems of deceleration and heating during re-entry into the atmosphere. It has to do this safely, reliably, repeatedly, and perhaps profitably, while carrying ordinary passengers in ordinary clothes, who, if they are traveling point-to-point, will want to bring along ordinary luggage as well.

We are far from that now. But by last fall, Virgin Galactic, a self-described "spaceline" founded by the flamboyant British entrepreneur Richard Branson and based in Mojave, California, was nearing the moment when it could offer rides to as many as six passengers at a time. In terms of space travel, these rides were to be baby steps—at best, a brief, straight-up excursion above the so-called Kármán line (100 kilometers high, in near-vacuum conditions, where space is somewhat arbitrarily said to begin), followed by a straight-down re-entry into Earth's atmosphere and a gliding return to the airport of origin. There had been technical setbacks, impossible promises, and all too much hype. Nonetheless, more than 700 people had bought tickets, most recently at $250,000 apiece, and after a decade of development and $500 million of investment, the machines were impressive and real.

There were two of them, constructed of carbon composites, and each for the moment was one-of-a-kind. The first, known







FOR VIRGIN GALACTIC, THERE HAD BEEN TECHNICAL SETBACKS, IMPOSSIBLE PROMISES, AND ALL TOO MUCH HYPE.



OFF THE GROUND *Left,* Branson, aviation designer Burt Rutan, and Microsoft's Paul Allen watch an XPrize-winning flight, 2004. *Below: left,* SpaceShipTwo being carried aloft; *right,* a mock-up of the spaceship's tail raised in the all-important "feathered" position.



PHOTOGRAPHS: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP, BY ROBERT GALBRAITH/GETTY IMAGES; JULES ANNAN/UPPA/ZUMAPRESS.COM; MARK GREENBERG/VIRGIN GALACTIC/GETTY IMAGES

as WhiteKnightTwo, was a strange-looking, twin-fuselage mother ship with a 140-foot wingspan and four turbofan engines—a heavy lifter designed to suspend a rocket ship between its fuselages, take off with it from a runway, and fly it into the thin air at 47,000 feet for a horizontal launch. The rocket ship itself, known as SpaceShipTwo, was a twin-tailed, stubby-winged aircraft the size of a business jet, built around a hybrid rocket engine containing enough fuel for a one-minute burn—sufficient to thrust the aircraft to a speed of Mach 3.5 (about 2,500 miles per hour) in a vertical climb and project it into space, from which it would return without power, as a glider. It had a two-pilot cockpit and a cabin large enough for six reclinable passenger seats, as yet to be installed.

At the core of the design was an unusual twin-boom tail that straddled the rocket motor. The tail had vertical stabilizers and various movable control surfaces, and operated more or less conventionally in regular flight. What made the tail unusual—highly unusual—was that the entire twin-boom apparatus was hinged. In regular flight it was held in position by mechanical locks, but it could be unlocked and then raised to a 60-degree angle overhead—nearly perpendicular to the fuselage. This raising of the tail was meant to be done in the thin air of near space, where aerodynamic loads are small. The purpose was to control the subsequent atmospheric re-entry by forcing the fuselage and wings into a flat attitude, like a pancake or belly-flop in relation to the fall. The resulting drag would tame the descent speeds and distribute the re-entry heat across large surface areas, rather than concentrating it on narrow leading edges. In short, raising the tail would keep the ship safe during re-entry. New terms for the invention had been coined: once raised into the upright configuration, the tail was said to be "feathered," and descents from space were said to be "feathered re-entries." Preliminary low-altitude test-flying had shown it to work well. The spaceship had not yet flown into space, but there was good reason to believe that, once

it did, it would safely negotiate the dangers of coming back down.

Confidence was all the greater because these aircraft—the mother ship and the spaceship—were not entirely new inventions. They were derivatives of the aircraft that in 2004 had won the $10 million Ansari XPrize, awarded to the first privately funded venture to put a human being into space. Those earlier aircraft had been built and flown by Scaled Composites, a Mojave-based company founded by an aeronautical engineer named Burt Rutan, who is famous for his innovations. As for Branson, he was a space enthusiast. He had registered the name Virgin Galactic more than a decade earlier, had been looking for the right technology, and was impressed by the tail-feathering idea. As a result, his Virgin Group helped to fund the final XPrize flights. The winning profile involved an air launch at altitude, a horizontal acceleration followed by a pull into a still-accelerating vertical climb, and an equally vertical descent under feather. Thrilled by the success, Branson decided to offer the same ride to the general public, and he turned to Rutan to scale up the XPrize designs.

Branson's career has been checkered and controversial. He has had some notable successes (Virgin Records, Virgin Atlantic) and some very public failures (Virgin Cola, Virgin Racing, Virgin Brides). Critics note that his efforts as a private entrepreneur have often involved backroom leveraging of public subsidies and infrastructure. He has embraced many causes, not always for the long haul. But judging from the investment of time and money, his commitment to Virgin Galactic is not a passing enthusiasm, even though as a purely business venture it seems to make no financial sense. Branson recently described his thinking to me over lunch in Toronto, where he had gone to advocate for the decriminalization of drugs. He said, "Like with any venture I've done with Virgin, I've never gone into it thinking, How can I make lots of money? I've gone into it because I want to create something. And then I try to make it pay its way. You never know where these things are going to take you. Quite often you head down one path with a bit of a dream, and then you find there are about seven other paths that open up." The idea, at the outset, was to sell the flights as thrills: rocket rides capped by ultra-high views and the chance to float around weightlessly for several minutes, followed by the experience of a high-G re-entry, a rollicking Branson-style hangar party once back on the ground, and bragging rights ever after. As Branson put it, "The thinking was to create a spaceship company that could give people the most memorable day in their lives." To publicize the effort, Branson had himself photographed in a NASA-style space suit, though no such space suit would be needed on the flights he proposed.

Branson expected that scaling up the XPrize designs would be a relatively simple matter. It was not, because scaling up turns out to be difficult, and also because these were to be flights offered not to fearless test pilots but to a well-heeled public that was bound to worry, as Branson put it, "about the one-way-ticket thing," by which he meant dying. Designing a new, high-powered rocket motor proved to be especially difficult, presenting problems with reliability, predictability, vibrations, and thrust. In 2007, during a cold-flow test—a test that does not involve actual ignition—an exploding oxidizer tank killed three Scaled Composites employees and seriously injured three others. Branson told me that Rutan was devastated by the deaths and afterward personally retreated from the project. Meanwhile, as the spaceship evolved, it grew heavier than intended (as aircraft in design typically do), raising questions about future payload and altitude capabilities. Nonetheless, by last fall the engineers at Scaled Composites, which is now a subsidiary of Northrop Grumman, believed that SpaceShipTwo was ready for the fourth in a planned series of seven rocket-powered test flights.

On the morning of October 31, the mother ship, with its attached spaceship, took off from the Mojave Air & Space Port and with special permission climbed to the southeast, into the vast restricted airspace around Edwards Air Force Base. It was a typical desert day. The sky was partially covered by broken thin clouds, clearing over Mojave. The visibility was unlimited. In command of the heavy lifter was an affable Scot, David Mackay, 58, a former R.A.F. test pilot and Virgin Atlantic captain who lives for stick-and-rudder flying. Mackay had flown the spaceship's previous test flight, nine months earlier, and after a 20-second burn of the rocket motor he had achieved Mach 1.4 and 71,000 feet, about twice as high as airliners fly. The goal of the current flight was to test a new fuel that promised smoother performance, and to push the aircraft faster and higher than it had gone before, though not yet into space. On this flight, as on the previous two, the tail-feathering configuration was to be used during the descent.

In the cockpit of the spaceship itself were two Scaled Composites test pilots, both of them engineers: Michael Alsbury, 39, who was serving as co-pilot, and Peter Siebold, 43, who was in command. They wore parachutes, but as is common in civilian prototype test-flying, they had no ejection seats. The cockpit was quiet except for the muted rush of the atmosphere outside. Far below them the desert stretched to the horizons. After a laborious climb, Mackay delivered them to a predetermined waypoint at 46,500 feet. In the spaceship the pilots went through checklists using the standard call-and-response: "Speed brake." "*Off.*" "Roll boost." "*On.*" "Isolation valve." "*Closed.*" Siebold was on the controls. At approximately 10:07 A.M., Alsbury armed the release. A crew member in the mother ship dropped them clear.

Three seconds into the drop, with the nose approximately level, Alsbury toggled two switches that lit the rocket. The effect was dramatic, a powerful shove that started as a kick and did not let up. The spaceship accelerated fast horizontally, pushing the pilots against their seatbacks with a force of three Gs. Nine seconds later, still accelerating at the same aggressive rate, the vehicle passed through Mach 1, the speed of sound—about 660 miles per hour at that altitude. Then the unthinkable happened. Sixteen seconds after the drop, 13 seconds after rocket ignition, and 4 seconds after exceeding the speed of sound, SpaceShipTwo suddenly came apart, exploding into pieces that powdered the sky. Michael Alsbury was killed instantly, leaving behind a wife and two children. Peter Siebold somehow parachuted to safety.

Richard Branson got word of the accident by e-mail in the British Virgin Islands, where he resides, and hired a jet to rush him to Mojave. He told me that when he landed he found that the hundreds of people on the intertwined teams at Virgin Galactic and Scaled Composites were milling around in grief and shock. Branson vowed publicly that the project would go on. A second spaceship was already being built. For now, the larger context had to be kept in mind. Unfortunate as it was, this had been an accident during the always risky process of developmental flight-testing, with willing and informed test pilots aboard; furthermore, as a test bed the aircraft had been unusually well instrumented and had sent a wealth of data back to the ground before the telemetry stopped. Investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board had arrived in Mojave and were going to have a relatively easy time; though the final report would take perhaps a year to complete, the basics were likely to be known within days. Virgin Galactic made the standard futile plea to avoid speculation in the meantime.

Speculation in the press was rampant nonetheless, and some of it was uninformed. The most prominent theory was that the rocket engine had exploded, though it had performed well during tests on the ground. An explosion was certainly within the realm of possibility, but in Mojave it was quickly known that the engine had hit the ground intact, as had the fuel tanks. The details seemed not to matter. *Time* magazine published an editorial titled "Enough with Amateur-Hour Space Flight,"

suggesting a connection between the in-flight breakup and what the author claimed to be Branson's arrogance and technical ignorance, and deploring the infiltration of dilettantes into the space business. The critique ignored the expertise that resides within Scaled Composites and Virgin Galactic. Amateurs? A number of team members had come directly from high positions at NASA after the shuttle program ended, and plenty of others had extensive aerospace experience as engineers, flight-operations managers, and test pilots. As for Branson, he has been a hands-off financier, helping absorb the huge costs and delays and keeping the project alive. But Branson is an anti-Establishment figure, who in all his endeavors—Virgin Mobile, Virgin Atlantic, and the rest—habitually pushes in front of the cameras, proclaiming that he can do better than others for less. Apparently his posturing and self-promotion can grate on people sometimes.

In any case, what seems to have taken the spaceship down was not ego but pilot error. The telemetry soon showed it conclusively. The error was related to the feathering mechanism—the all-important, drag-inducing re-entry device. Scaled Composites' engineers had decided on a two-step procedure for deploying it. First, the pilots would pull a handle to unlock the hinged tail early during the rocket burn, when the ship was at Mach 1.4, and at a low enough altitude to abort the ascent into space in the unlikely event that the unlocking failed. At Mach 1.4, the aerodynamic pressures would be downward on the tail, keeping it conventionally aligned, flush with the wings and the fuselage. That was the calculation, and it included ample safety margins. Second, after the rocket burn was complete and the aircraft in its vertical climb had slowed to aerodynamic speeds of 30 miles an hour or less, the pilots would pull another handle to raise the feather—a 20-second endeavor in thin air that would raise the tail nearly to perpendicular. The two-step procedure had worked as predicted on previous test flights.

This time, however, was different. Eight seconds after igniting the rocket, while still in horizontal flight, and well short of the Mach 1.4 threshold, the co-pilot, Michael Alsbury, reached forward and prematurely unlocked the tail. This was seen on a cockpit video transmitted to the ground. Why he did it may never be known. Unlocking the tail was a checklist item, requiring call-and-response. Alsbury had rehearsed it with Siebold in a simulator dozens of times, and as a pilot he had a reputation for flying by the book. Unlocking prematurely was certainly an exception. The problem was that the rocket ship just then was approaching the speed of sound. Complex shock waves were developing across the airfoils, and aerodynamic pressures were for the moment upward rather than downward on the tail. Siebold was too busy flying to notice what Alsbury had done. There have been reports that Alsbury may have understood his error and fumbled to shut off the propulsion, but this seems unlikely because the normal first reaction would instead have been to relock the tail. Whatever the truth, it was too late. A few seconds after Alsbury pulled the unlock handle, the tail reared up. The spaceship pitched up violently in response and was broken apart by positive G-loads beyond its limits. The fuselage then pitched down and tumbled head over heels, experiencing negative G-loads of sufficient force to rip Siebold's seat from the floorboards and spit him through a gap that had appeared overhead as the top of the cockpit tore away.

Alsbury's body would be found still strapped to his seat amid the main wreckage, which lay in a five-mile swath across the desert floor. Siebold was thrown into the clear cold blue and lost consciousness. He fell for at least 25,000 feet, then came to and seemingly had the presence of mind to unbuckle from his seat, allowing his parachute to deploy, which it soon did automatically. A chase airplane circled him as he floated down, and he waved to indicate that he was alive. He suffered injuries including a broken shoulder, and after a hospital stint during which he was checked for the possible consequences of high-altitude exposure, he returned to work to push the project forward.

II. Chasing the XPrize

Burt Rutan, the ferociously inventive engineer behind Scaled Composites, had retired from the company three years before the accident and was at his new house, overlooking Coeur d'Alene Lake, in Idaho, when he heard belatedly that the breakup had occurred. In private, he was angry that he had not been told sooner. He was also angry that Alsbury, one of his protégés, had made such an avoidable mistake. Rutan was not insensitive to the tragedy—he can be a very sensitive man—but the accident seems to have evoked in him a feeling of betrayal. While he was at the company he had relegated the Virgin Galactic work to his deputies and had not played an active role in the engineering of the aircraft or the spaceship, but it was obvious that they were the children of his XPrize designs and therefore reflected on his legacy.

Rutan was raised in the 1950s in a small town called Dinuba, in California's San Joaquin Valley. His father, a dentist, was a self-reliant man and the proud descendant of wagon-train pioneers. As a child, Rutan began to design and build balsa-wood model airplanes. He learned to fly, and soloed in a two-seat Aeronca Champ when he was 16, in 1959. His older brother, Dick, who would later set distance records by piloting some of Rutan's designs, went off to fly fighters for the U.S. Air Force in Vietnam. Rutan took a more cerebral approach and studied aeronautical engineering at Cal Poly, in San Luis Obispo, from which he graduated in 1965. He hired on at Edwards Air Force Base, in the Mojave Desert, and spent the next seven years as a civilian flight-test engineer, strapped into airplanes behind test pilots to gather knowledge about new and existing designs. He helped to tame certain stall characteristics of the F-4 Phantom, and for this he earned an air-force medal.

But, for Rutan, that was not enough. While still in college, he had begun to design a strange-looking two-seat airplane with a pusher prop and a horizontal stabilizer on the nose—a configuration meant to be stall-proof and stable, and therefore especially safe. It was an ugly little thing, made out of wood and fiberglass, and very slow, but it was highly inventive aerodynamically. Rutan called it the VariViggen—the reference being to the Saab 37 Viggen fighter, which has some design similarities. In 1972 he flew the VariViggen for the first time, and it handled well. As a homebuilt airplane it was not vouched for by the F.A.A. and was officially classified as experimental. This is a standard category for homebuilt

THERE WAS TALK OF A
SPACE HOTEL,
WHERE GUESTS WOULD HAVE
WEIGHTLESS SEX IN
BUBBLE-GLASSED ROOMS.

AT THE SPEED OF SOUND, SPACESHIPTWO SUDDENLY CAME APART, EXPLODING INTO PIECES THAT POWDERED THE SKY.

aircraft—even those constructed, as most are, from store-bought plans and kits. Such airplanes cannot be mass-produced or flown commercially, but they can be built (and later bought and sold) free of the governmental oversight that characterizes conventional aircraft development. Partly as a result, they tend to perform better than manufactured airplanes do, and at lower cost. The advantages generally come at increased risk, but the market for homemade airplanes is large—there are perhaps 150,000 potential do-it-yourselfers in the United States alone. It was these people whom Rutan went after. In 1974, having left his job at Edwards, he set up shop in a shed at a civilian airport in nearby Mojave and began selling plans for the VariViggen.

The town of Mojave is hardly more than the slowing of a desert highway. With its liquor stores and flimsy motels it looks like the setting for a film-noir crime spree. It is dwarfed by the adjoining airport, a former Marine Corps flight-training field with long runways, big hangars, and square miles of empty ramp space. The airport lies just outside the restricted airspace around Edwards Air Force Base—a huge piece of sky called R-2508, where high-performance flying can be done. Recognizing these special attributes, in the early 1970s two private pilots with libertarian leanings—a Kern County farmer turned airport manager named Dan Sabovich and Congressman Barry Goldwater Jr.—arranged to declare the airport a civilian test-flight facility, an aviation oasis where regulators would not interfere. Sabovich intended to facilitate experimentation by providing shop space at low cost and then staying out of the way—and that is what he did, giving birth to what has since grown into the greatest hotbed of innovation that aviation has ever known. Rutan was among the first tenants, at 20 cents per square foot. He called his enterprise the Rutan Aircraft Factory.

Over the next few years he designed and flew a series of unconventional airplanes, primarily two-seaters made of composite materials. All of them were test platforms, one-off prototypes, some of which, once refined, formed the basis of plans that Rutan offered to the homebuilt-aircraft market. The business was a success—the plans sold by the thousands. The downside was that hundreds of the finished products soon flew, and though they were designed to be unusually safe, a normal number of them crashed, sometimes with fatal results. The accidents forced Rutan to confront two related truths in aviation: that even the best-designed airplanes are never foolproof, and that claims to exceptional safety are never wise. These are truths that Virgin Galactic might bear in mind. For Rutan, the libertarian oasis in Mojave turned out to be a mirage. Lawsuits forced him repeatedly into court to defend his designs. In 1985 he shut the whole thing down, scrapped the Rutan Aircraft Factory, and never again sold plans to the public. He had already founded a new company, Scaled Composites, to design and build mission-specific prototypes and engineering models for the aerospace industry, and this is what he did for the next 26 years.

Only one of those designs ever went into production—the Beechcraft Starship—and it was soon pulled from the market. All other Rutan designs were experimental, including many made for Department of Defense contractors. The truth when it came to libertarianism was that big government had arrived, and with it the requirement to safeguard state secrets, the ultimate form of regulation with which Rutan complied. But he prospered, as did the airport, and Scaled Composites grew to several hundred employees. In some cases the quest for invention bordered on the meaningless. There was, for instance, the desire of his brother Dick, who had retired from the air force, to be the first to fly around the world without refueling. It was an empty stunt, but Rutan built the airplane to let it happen—essentially a large powered sailplane with plenty of fuel—and in 1986 the flight of the Voyager was made from Edwards to Edwards while crossing the equator twice. The flight took nine days and proved to be difficult and risky, but the publicity was huge, with thousands in attendance for the landing, and extensive tele-







PHOTOGRAPHS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP, BY JASON DIVENERE/VIRGIN GALACTIC/GETTY IMAGES, FROM REUTERS/CORBIS, FROM XINHUA/POLARIS, FROM REUTERS/CORBIS







FATAL FLIGHT
Top, SpaceShipTwo pilot Mike Alsbury (second from left), who would be killed in the accident, and David Mackay (far right) before a test flight, 2013. *Center,* the spaceship disintegrates, 2014. *Bottom,* investigators examine the wreckage.

vision coverage. Afterward, Dick went off on the dare-to-dream circuit, and Rutan became widely known, legitimately, as the most original airplane-maker of recent times.

In the 1990s, space beckoned, and Rutan began to think about suborbital space travel, only to run up against the very reasons it is not done—safety, expense, and the lack of appropriate materials and technologies. Around 2001 he set aside the point-to-point ambition—getting space travelers from Los Angeles to Tokyo, for instance—and settled on the more modest idea of going after the XPrize. The challenge was very specific: to build a vehicle capable of carrying people, however briefly, above the 100-kilometer Kármán line, and to send it there twice within two weeks. Rutan decided on an approach similar to that used by the X-15 rocket planes of the 1960s: an airborne launch, a rocket-propelled climb, and a gliding return to the runway. The craft he designed would be hand-flown into space and back. It would weigh about 8,000 pounds fully loaded, one-quarter the weight of the X-15 but with a thrust-to-weight ratio of two to one, which was about the same. Unlike any other spaceflight that has ever been attempted, it would not describe an arc but, after the horizontal launch, would go straight up, hit zero velocity at the apogee, and fall straight back down. Atmospheric re-entry was the big worry. Rutan had been among the search party at Edwards in 1967 when an X-15 disintegrated at Mach 4, killing the pilot because he had gotten the re-entry angle wrong. Rutan was determined not just to slow the re-entry speeds but to take the angle out of human hands, so that in this critical phase the aircraft would sort itself out aerodynamically, and no piloting skill would be required. A tail-feathering configuration promised to be the solution. And it was.

Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, who is an aviation enthusiast, was convinced by the plan. He flew to Mojave in his private Boeing 757 and offered to fund the effort—ultimately for $28 million—in return for a majority stake in the intellectual property and the licensing fees that might result. He and Rutan formed a company to own the project, and gave the contract to build and fly the aircraft to Scaled Composites. The close interweaving of nominally distinct companies has long been a feature of Rutan's operations and has affected Virgin Galactic as well. In any case, Allen was less interested in the two formal XPrize flights than in the full-altitude test flight that would precede them: he wanted to be the man behind the first privately funded human spaceflight in history. That flight, after 14 previous test flights at lower altitudes,

occurred on the morning of June 21, 2004, in front of thousands who had gathered at the Mojave airport to witness the event.

The test pilot was Michael Melvill, an unassuming 63-year-old immigrant, originally from South Africa, who 30 years earlier had completed the first plan-built VariViggen, and then had gone to work for Rutan to help run the shop. Melvill was unusually good with his hands, and useful therefore in the building of prototypes, but his greatest talent turned out to be in test-flying airplanes. Indeed, he was a genius at it—as good as the best have ever been. As a former flight-test engineer, Rutan recognized this. Melvill was an ordinary-seeming man in person, and he did not fly simulators very well (that was for younger pilots and video-gamers), but if you put him into an experimental airplane in flight he became transformed, able to execute flight-test plans with precision, to remain unflappable no matter what the circumstances, and to come home time after time with the data required. It helped that he was also intensely devoted to Rutan and willing to risk his life on the master's behalf.

He certainly did that now. The renowned aviation writer Peter Garrison, himself an accomplished aerodynamicist and aircraft builder, described the first spaceship as hardly more than a tiny hot rod consisting of an airtight cabin glued to the front end of a homemade rocket. With eyes to the future, Rutan called it Spaceship One. Melvill dropped with it from the mother ship at 47,000 feet and lit the fire. He had done this once before, on an earlier test flight, and had been shocked by the forces, the vibrations, and the howling of the rocket motor; this second time, he told me, the experience was better because he knew what to expect. But, suddenly, as he was pulling through 60,000 feet, wind shear rocked the spaceship 30 degrees wing-down to the right. Surprised, Melvill countered with excessive controls, and the ship responded by rolling 90 degrees wing-down to the left, and then, as he corrected again, the same to right. Melvill finally got the wings level, and under heavy vibrations and G-loads continued into a vertical climb. He shut off the engine 76 seconds into the burn while climbing through 180,000 feet at Mach 2.9, and kept climbing purely as a projectile. Working now in weightless conditions, he raised the tail on schedule into the feathered position. The ship continued to shoot upward through the vacuum outside.

Then came some bad news: when Melvill tried to trim the tail's twin horizontal stabilizers to adjust the aerodynamic surfaces for the coming glide, he discovered that the trimming mechanism had failed, leaving the tail configured in a way that would cause the spaceship to spin out of control catastrophically during the descent. Watched over by mission controllers on the ground, who were observing the telemetry, Melvill tried to remedy the problem using a backup system, but to no avail. It was a death sentence. He later told me, "As you can imagine, it made me feel pretty bad."

That was his mood when he crossed the Kármán line and entered space for the first time. With nothing better to do, he took some M&Ms from his pocket and set them free to float around. He hit the apogee at 328,491 feet and then started down toward self-destruction. As the aircraft descended into the upper atmosphere and the G-load began to grow, he reached up to the backup trim switch and nudged it again, though without hope. To his surprise, this time it functioned correctly and eased the angle of the errant stabilizer. He saw the indication on an instrument. The mission controllers saw the indication, too, and advised him to use the switch again—not to the full extent necessary to normalize the trim, because of concern about inducing another failure, but sufficiently to provide perhaps for a controllable glide. This is what he did, fighting powerful tendencies to roll to the right and countering in the end with nearly full-left stick, but succeeding with a smooth landing back at Mojave.

At the airport the crowd cheered. Paul Allen was satisfied with his investment. Melvill had experienced 3.5 minutes of weightlessness, had spent 10 seconds in official space, and had endured a feathered re-entry at five Gs without burning up. The design had worked, and Melvill had become the first commercial astronaut.

Rutan gave him a sign to hold up for the cameras. It was provided by an Arizona radio host and activist from the Western Libertarian Alliance, Rutan's fellow travelers, who were well represented in the crowd. The sign read, SPACESHIPONE, GOVERNMENTZERO. The message ignored the fact, as Rutan has done on other occasions in public mockery of NASA and big government, that Scaled Composites had been living on Pentagon dollars for years. The euphoria was overwhelming. There was even talk of private flights to a new space hotel, where guests would have bubble-glassed rooms for performing weightless sex while orbiting the earth. But Melvill's flight had been a very near thing.

The same was true of the two successful XPrize flights several months later, in the autumn of 2004. The first was flown by Melvill again. As a result of design errors related to wing configuration, the spaceship became unstable while accelerating through Mach 2.7 in the vertical climb and began to roll rapidly to the right. Melville was able to slow the rolls by using conventional aerodynamic controls as he spun upward into the near vacuum of space. After he extinguished the rocket and feathered the tail, he managed to stop the roll entirely by employing the reaction-control system—little nozzles that regulated the ship's attitude in space by shooting out streams of compressed air. In the process he consumed the entire compressed-air supply, leaving the ship steady but uncontrollable in space. He rose through the Kármán line in that condition, and reached the apogee at 337,700 feet, about 9,000 feet higher than he had gone before. The feather sorted things out on the way down, though it swung him through pendulum oscillations as it did. After he landed and could speak to Rutan in private, he expressed disappointment at having expended all the compressed air. He told me that Rutan answered, "No, don't you see? Before I was just guessing how much we might need, and now it turns out I was right!" Yes, but with no safety margin built in. Even Melvill was taken aback.

The second and final XPrize flight was flown by another test pilot, Brian Binnie, and though it was equally violent, it was less eventful because of modifications to the climb profile. Binnie reached 367,500 feet, 13,000 feet higher than the X-15 record, and returned to land safely in front of the usual ecstatic crowd. But Rutan knew how close to the edge even that flight had skated. Having escaped space with his reputation intact, he

PASSENGERS WHO WANT TO TWEET DURING ROCKET-SHIP FLIGHTS ARE WOEFULLY UNPREPARED FOR THE RIDE.

vetoed the idea of yet another flight, and Melvill readily agreed. He told me later he was just glad to have finished the program alive.

III. Into the Sky

Richard Branson went to Mojave to witness the final XPrize flight. He had joined the effort and begun providing operational subsidies in return for having a Virgin Galactic logo displayed on the tail, and was so confident of its success that he had already signed a contract with Paul Allen to adopt the technology under license for his space-touring venture. Allen was there, too. As the spaceship rocketed upward, Branson turned to him and said, "Paul, isn't this better than the best sex you ever had?" Allen did not answer "Yes" or, better yet, "No." What was going through his mind, he later wrote, was "If I was this anxious during any kind of interpersonal activity, I couldn't enjoy it very much." Branson and Allen are certainly different men. Allen says he will not go into space, because he has learned to be afraid. Branson vows not only to be on the first commercial flight but to bring his children as well.

Despite the in-flight breakup last October, there is reason to believe that Branson will have his chance, and that others will follow along. Only about 20 passengers have canceled their tickets. The development work in Mojave continues unabated. After the second Virgin spaceship (now being built by Virgin Galactic itself) is completed, flight-testing will resume. Commercial flights could begin toward the end of 2016. They will take off and land from a "spaceport" in the desert near Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, which the state government is funding at a cost of $209 million. The passengers will participate on the legal basis of informed consent, much as people do in homebuilt aircraft, without the assurances that apply to airline travel. But informing passengers is not quite the same as warning them, and warnings don't necessarily sink in. Branson is dealing with the ordinary lay public here but offering an experience that is different from the usual product. Some passengers on the list have already asked if they can bring music along, or cameras so they can take pictures of themselves, and others have asked about WiFi so they can tweet during the flights. Such people are woefully unprepared for this rocket-ship ride.

Branson's spaceship is not an airliner. It is smoother and more stable than Rutan's earlier XPrize machine, and less susceptible to upsets, but it is a radical design nonetheless, and it will be flying a profile that is equally extreme. Virgin Galactic pretends that the flights can become routine, but given that all four of the pilots currently slated to make the first passenger runs have high-performance military flight-testing backgrounds, the company seems to have recognized the challenges it will face in keeping the customers alive. I asked David Mackay how the spaceship handles. In the understated manner of test pilots, he said, "For a vehicle that launches at 120 knots, accelerates to Mach 3.5, goes up to the altitudes it goes to, then folds itself to re-enter, it flies surprisingly well."

It is possible to fill in some details of future flights when passengers will be aboard. The cockpit is open to the cabin. The pilots sit side by side at the controls. The passengers—as many as six—sit in two single-seat rows behind them, beside large circular windows, with other windows overhead. Their seats are upright for the launch and climb but can be rotated backward into a reclined position to counter the effects of G-loads during the re-entry. It will be helpful if the passengers have gone through some high-G and zero-G training in advance, in addition to the two or three days of preparation that Virgin Galactic expects to provide in New Mexico during the run-up to the flight. Over many years as an aerobatic flight instructor, I observed that people quickly learn to handle loads of up to three Gs, but that, depending on their physical condition and seat position, some get tunnel vision and begin to black out above that. Zero and negative Gs present no such risk, but, like flying upside down, take longer to get used to—usually about five hours of aerobatic training in flight until the vomiting stops.

So, here's the scene, and it starts off clean. Each flight should last about an hour and a half in total. The passengers sit strapped in and upright wearing padded helmets and flight suits emblazoned with the Virgin logo. The mother ship lifts off and climbs for about 45 minutes to an altitude of 47,000 feet. At the moment of release, the spaceship does not merely drop but pitches down for a clear separation. The maneuver is felt by the passengers as a slight negative G that raises them against their seat belts—the same sinking sensation that can sometimes be felt on a commercial jet in moderate turbulence. Then the co-pilot ignites the rocket, and there is nothing moderate about it. The motor achieves full thrust within a second and shoves the aircraft forward with a relentless three-G acceleration that pushes the passengers against their seatbacks and keeps them there. The G-load in that axis is relatively benign, because it does not drain blood from the head, but, in combination with the vibrations and noise, it may disorient some passengers and will likely surprise most.

Accelerating through Mach 0.95, the aircraft wobbles as shock waves develop on its wings and tails. This is known as a burble, and it marks the entry into supersonic flight. The shock waves change the airflow over the conventional control surfaces—the elevons—and render them almost useless, forcing the pilot in supersonic flight to fly entirely by trimming the stabilizers on the tail. Flying by trim is difficult to do well, but with pilots like these the passengers probably don't need to worry. At Mach 1, the pilot rolls the pitch trim aft to a pre-determined position, and the spaceship responds by bending the flight path upward at a rate that pushes the passengers straight down into their seats with a force of 2.5 Gs. The passengers are now experiencing a total of 5.5 Gs, divided between two distinct vectors, and are rotated onto their backs as the spaceship accelerates ever more steeply upward. As they approach the vertical, nearing Mach 2, the pilot rolls the trim forward to capture the position, and 2.5 Gs are stripped away. Pointing straight up, the ship rockets into air growing so thin that the aerodynamic speeds decrease rapidly even as the ship keeps accelerating through Mach 3. At around that time, after about one minute of burn, and when an onboard instrument shows that the vehicle has sufficient energy to follow a ballistic path into space, the pilots shut down the rocket motor. The effect for the passengers, who are lying on their backs, facing straight up, is to go immediately from a condition of three Gs to the zero-G state called weightlessness.

This has little to do with being in space. In fact, Branson's passengers, now at an altitude of about 150,000 feet, are only halfway there. But even if they were all the way there, somewhere above the Kármán line, or three times higher, where the shuttle flew, it would not mean that the earth's gravitational pull had somehow been escaped. Indeed, the force of gravity at those altitudes is nearly the same as on the ground. Objects achieve low orbits not by levitation but by the energy invested in their speed: with no atmosphere to slow them down they travel so fast horizontally (at least 17,500 miles per hour) that, as they drop toward the surface, their path matches the curvature of the earth. They go into an undiminishing free fall around the planet. It is the free fall, the vertical acceleration, that produces zero Gs. This may be intuitively obvious when it comes to the initial descent from the apogee, before the atmosphere begins to slow things down, but it is equally true during the ascent, after the rocket motor cuts out and the vertical deceleration is due purely to gravity's pull, without the complications of aerodynamic drag. Pure accelerations, negative or positive, have the same effect. Slowing while going up feels exactly like falling down.

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An abrupt transition from three to zero Gs is what shuttle crews went through. A shuttle

commander told me it was disconcerting the first time, like stepping off a cliff into a vacuum. It helped to remain strapped into a seat for a while, and then to avoid unusual movements for the first day or two. But aboard the Virgin spaceship, this is the moment the passengers have been waiting for, and they won't have time to get acclimated. After a pilot gives the O.K., they can push a single release button, free themselves from their straps, and go floating around. They have about four minutes of this before needing to settle down. Some may be so stunned by the rocket flight that they don't dare release, but we can assume that having gone this far most will follow through with the plan. Once they release, they can have a great time: do somersaults in midair, assume yoga positions, think lofty thoughts about life on earth, and try not to kick one another in the face. We have also entered here into the realm of projectile vomiting. Virgin Galactic insists that this will not be a problem, but presumably it will equip passengers with quick-access sick bags. Whatever happens in the cabin, the passengers are on their own; the pilots remain strapped in and cannot move aft to help.

Though slowing, the spaceship is still climbing rapidly. A few seconds after the rocket shutdown, as the vehicle shoots through 210,000 feet, the air outside becomes so thin that the aerodynamic forces amount to the merest breeze. The pilots activate the reaction-control system—the compressed-air jets—and raise the tail into the feathered position. The action of feathering at this point uses the last of the outside air to gently pitch the spaceship onto its back. Very soon after that there is essentially no drag on the vehicle; it is above the atmosphere, though not yet in space. It keeps climbing and would do so in exactly the same manner, no matter what the attitude—tail first, sideways, whatever—but through the overhead windows the upside-down position gives the passengers the best view of Earth below. In this attitude, inverted, the spaceship climbs through the 100-kilometer Kármán line and then goes 10 kilometers higher, to an apogee of 361,000 feet—at least if it performs according to the original plans. The view from here stretches for hundreds of miles and includes gently curved horizons topped by a thin line of atmosphere, with the blackness of outer space beyond.

From its apogee the ship now begins to fall, accelerating vertically to more than Mach 3 and a rate of descent of 200,000 feet per minute. During the fall, the pilot uses the reaction-control jets to pitch the aircraft right side up again, with its wings level and nose slightly below the horizon—the attitude it will be forced into by the feather as it descends into the upper atmosphere. The procedure is not necessary for safety but helps to avoid the violent pendulum oscillations that Mike Melvill endured. By now the passenger seats have been reconfigured to a reclined position in anticipation of the G-loads to come. The passengers are still floating around. Virgin Galactic has run zero-G tests with a cabin mock-up being flown in brief parabolic arcs, and believes that, when the pilots give the word, ordinary passengers should be able to return to their seats and strap in. This remains to be seen. Those who do not succeed in reaching their seats will have to lie in the aisle for the re-entry. The G-loads come on gently at first, but then ramp up quickly as aerodynamic drag slows the descent. The total time experiencing loads above 2 Gs is about 40 seconds. The loads build to 5.5 Gs, then subside. This is not a dual-directional force but a single vector toward the cabin floor. The pilots are conditioned to take it sitting up. Because of their reclined positions, few if any of the passengers will have trouble.

By the time the re-entry ends, at about 60,000 feet, the descent rate has slowed to subsonic speeds. The pilots unfeather the tail, returning it to a conventional position, flush with the fuselage, and locking it there. This pitches the nose down steeply, about 45 degrees below the horizon, and puts the aircraft into a dive. The pilot pulls out of the dive and enters a relatively sedate glide at 185 miles an hour. The passenger seats are returned to the upright position. The glide lasts 20 minutes and finishes with a touchdown on the runway. It is not clear how many of the passengers will be in a condition quite yet to celebrate. But it is doubtful that any of them, having invested so much in the experience, will regret having made the flight. All that is in the future. But, barring another accident, it is a future that seems certain to come. □

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Wall Street Meltdown



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 151 Sachs standing tall.

Both Blankfein and Cohn are well paid to lead the way to this bright future: in 2014, they received compensation of $24 million and $22 million, respectively. They also own Goldman stock currently worth around $590 million (Blankfein) and around $340 million (Cohn). Asked if he is waiting for Blankfein to retire so he can ascend to the top spot—guessing when is a favorite parlor game on Wall Street these days—Cohn says, "I'm a happy guy. I'm here at 5:35 on a Friday night talking to you."

Tales of the Citi

There are no more waiting games for Vikram Pandit, the chairman and C.E.O. of Citigroup during the period of its massive government bailout in late 2008, who was then unceremoniously forced out of the bank in October 2012 after its new chairman, Michael E. O'Neill, told him, simply, "The board has lost confidence in you."

Pandit and I met for a rare interview in his sunny but spare corner office, 30 floors above Madison Avenue, at TGG Group, a consulting-and-investment firm that is the brainchild of Steven Levitt, the co-author of the *Freakonomics* series of books, and Daniel Kahneman, the Nobel Prize–winning economist and the author of the best-seller *Thinking, Fast and Slow.* When Pandit became C.E.O. of Citigroup, in December 2007, he set about reforming the firm's far-flung operations. In his first six months, he raised around $70 billion of new capital ("as much as the capital markets would allow you to take," he says); brought in new people to run major businesses, including an overhaul of the firm's risk-management operations; centralized information technology from 51 separate operations worldwide; and attempted to eliminate the bank's famously internecine fiefdoms.

Then pandemonium hit. "I'm sure if I had known that [the crisis was coming], I would have thought about [taking the C.E.O. job] a lot more," he says. Over time, he and his team sold the storied Smith Barney brokerage and wealth-management firm to Morgan Stanley; sold Citigroup's retail business in Germany and other, smaller businesses; fired 115,000 of the bank's 375,000 employees worldwide; and hived off 40 percent of the company's assets into something called "Citi Holdings," which would be sold off slowly over time. The challenge was "to take the psychology of people and put the right leadership in place so you can take the psyche back from where it was by saying, 'This is who we are. We are going to be proud of who we are going forward.'" The low point for Pandit came when Citi's stock traded for under a dollar in February 2009, even though he knew the bank was doing better. "It's the height of uncertainty," he

remembers. "You did everything you could. You were at the right point, but it just hadn't turned. It turned out that was the bottom."

He is grateful to the American taxpayers and the federal government for the help Citigroup received during the crisis, and he is happy to say so publicly. "If it weren't for TARP, if it weren't for all of the liquidity lines and the funding lines the Fed and everybody provided, I don't know if we could have collectively instilled confidence in the financial markets," he says. But he also believes Citigroup was "a good steward" of that money, which it paid back quickly with interest—the government saw a $12 billion profit thanks to the equity investment it made in Citigroup as part of the bailout. "I was really pleased that we could use the money for the purpose it was provided, which was to instill confidence, get all the changes made, turn around, pay it back, get out of there," he says. (Citigroup still has many skeptics, who point to its failure to pass certain Treasury "stress tests" and the fact that it remains a sprawling mess. "They are hanging on to this pretty far-flung enterprise, which I don't see how one can manage," says one competitor.)

Greg Fleming also had a front-row seat while the crisis was unfolding. As the president of Merrill Lynch, he devised and executed the strategy that resulted in the eleventh-hour sale of Merrill Lynch to Bank of America. Had that deal not happened, it is more than likely Merrill Lynch would have followed Lehman Brothers into bankruptcy. Fleming, 52 and now the head of wealth and investment management at Morgan Stanley, says part of the problem as the crisis developed was that many senior Wall Street executives had been conditioned by previous crises to believe that once the initial problem presented itself—in this case, the collapse of Bear Stearns—the smart money assumed that the worst had passed and that huge profits could be made during the resulting financial chaos and recovery. But this time was different. "People were like, 'Bear was the issue. They were the smallest. They were the issue.' And because of that there wasn't enough fear that we had better get ahead of this."

Fleming says that when Merrill was in the throes of the meltdown, it felt to him like experiencing the Hunger Games. "One of the things that I'll never forget is the unremitting feeling of being hunted," he says.

To Fleming, Merrill's survival became existential. "I wanted Merrill to be the animal that survived," he says. "And away from that I had nothing else on my mind. It wasn't my issue what was happening elsewhere. I was having a hard enough time with Merrill. But I was singularly focused on my firm not being the one to get killed. And that's why I was so focused on Bank of America, because they were the only ones who would buy a company in 72 hours."

Dimon Jim

Jamie Dimon, the 58-year-old chairman and C.E.O. of JPMorgan Chase, remembers well the various pieces of the crisis that seemed to climax with the collapses of Lehman Brothers, A.I.G., Wachovia, and Citigroup, then nearly of Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs. "There were some breathless moments, like 'Oh my God, the whole American system is in trouble,'" he says in his office high above Park Avenue. "It is important to remember industrial production was dropping 10 percent. People were talking about major layoffs. The market was down." He believed the government should do everything in its power to stop the hemorrhaging. "I also didn't think that they had an easy answer," he continues, "but I remember saying to Hank [Paulson] and Tim [Geithner] several times, 'Just come out punching. Try one thing. Try another thing. It eventually will work because eventually you will win.' The Federal Reserve is that powerful. They could buy every asset in the world if they had to. They were very courageous and their actions stemmed the tide."

He says that the critics of TARP and other bailout schemes that benefited Wall Street proclaim "a million different ways it could have been better" and that even Geithner complains about "collateral beneficiaries" of the bailouts—"the people who were saved that shouldn't have been saved or made money that shouldn't have made money"—but Dimon believes these critics fail to see the bigger picture. The decision to rescue A.I.G. and other companies "helped save the system," he says, and he is unapologetic about how important it was for collateral payments to be made to A.I.G.'s counter-parties, such as Goldman, which got $12.9 billion, and Société Générale, the big French bank, which got $11.9 billion of taxpayer money. Unfortunately, he notes, this gave critics all the ammunition they needed to vilify Wall Street and its bankers: "In hindsight—again, this is pure hindsight, not criticism—once we did TARP, big banks were damaged for 20 years, whether or not you needed it. The refrain became 'The banks were bailed out.' 'The bastards were bailed out' and 'They caused the problem and they paid themselves a lot of money.' As American citizens, if you believe all banks were bailed out, you would hate banks. I would, too."

He doesn't believe that just the banks were bailed out; he believes the American way of life was preserved, whether it was General Motors, or money-market funds, or commercial paper, or increasing depositor's insurance to $250,000. "Damaging the whole bank system that way also damaged the country," he says. "It damaged a belief in the system. In hindsight, if you look back, what really saved the system wasn't TARP and it wasn't the stress test. What really saved the system was the wall of liquidity that the Fed put up. . . . Businesses had liquidity and the market started to come back and the confidence returned."

In retrospect, Dimon says, a better way to rescue the system may have been to dismantle the banks that screwed things up. "If management ruined their companies, their boards should have been fired, management should have been fired," he continues. "I support the clawbacks. I think that's perfectly fine. The American public would have received some sense of justice being done." He thinks there should have been some differentiation between well-run banks and poorly run banks: "If you said to me, how do I feel about some of these C.E.O.'s who walked away with $50, $100, $150 million and their company blew up? Terrible. It's outrageous. I agree with them. Everyone says that's bad. If this company went bankrupt, we should all give back the money we earned in the last five years or more. You wouldn't have to ask me."

Instead, what happened, Dimon says, is that every banker got tarred with the same broad brush. "What happened with TARP is it just became every banker's scarlet letter," he says. The damage the financial crisis did to the banks' reputations will take a generation to repair. "That is the way it's going to be probably in my working lifetime," he says. "What happened was too damaging. The general population is too mad."

Somewhat surprisingly, Dimon makes clear he would not have rescued Bear Stearns if he had it to do over again. "In a new world we wouldn't buy Bear," he says. "There was just too much litigation afterwards, and we were held responsible for their historic mistakes." He's right about that. Since June 2011, using its shareholders' money, JPMorgan Chase has paid more than $35.2 billion in fines and penalties related to various scandals, frauds, and mistakes that came to light because of the financial crisis, including a mammoth $13 billion fine paid in November 2013 to the federal government and several states related to the pre-crisis underwriting of mortgage-backed securities at both Bear Stearns and JPMorgan itself.

In the wake of that settlement—record-breaking at the time—the JPMorgan board gave Dimon a raise to $20 million from $11.5 million. In 2014, the bank earned $21.8 billion in profit—its most ever—and the board maintained Dimon's total compensation of $20 million. His 8.1 million JPMorgan Chase shares are worth around $480 million these days.

Memento Mori

Dimon's world was turned upside down last June as he was embarking on a three-week trip to Asia and noticed a swollen gland on the right side of his face, under his jawbone. He couldn't see it, but he felt it there when he was shaving. "Just a little bump," he recalls. He went on the trip anyway, figuring it would go away. "It felt normal to me," he says. When he got back home he went to see his doctor. "To him it felt a little hard," Dimon continues. "To me, it felt like a normal puffy lymph gland. So, between the hardness, it being on one side, and my age, he said, 'You need to get a PET

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scan right away and be braced for bad news.'"

Understandably, he was afraid: "You go for the PET scan, the guy says, 'Well, most people that come in here for this have cancer.'" He had the scan. Then the doctors took a biopsy. "They confirmed it was cancer," he says.

A day after he was diagnosed, Dimon called Lee Raymond, the former C.E.O. of Exxon Mobil and the lead director on the JPMorgan Chase board. Raymond was supportive, as were his fellow board members. "Don't worry about the company," they told him. "Don't worry about us. Focus on yourself and family."

Dimon appreciated that because, he says, he knew he was in a battle. He scheduled his radiation treatments for seven o'clock in the morning, when few other patients were there. They fitted a mask to his face and bolted him down to the table to make sure he would not move, and then with laserlike precision the machines administered the treatment. He also had six full days of chemotherapy. He lost 35 pounds. His body was burning some 4,000 calories a day because of the treatment. "It was hard to eat," he says. "Your throat hurts. You have no appetite. Everything tastes just absolutely terrible. So you literally just search for the foods that you can get down." Into this group fell oatmeal, scrambled eggs, and milk shakes.

He could not help but think of his own mortality. "You wonder: how could it possibly be me?," he says. "Well, of course it could happen to you. You have it. Then, of course, you wake up every morning and you hope it's a bad dream. Then you wake up. I have cancer. I have to go to treatment again. Then I have to wait three months to find out if it worked. Even then you're bracing for 'Well, we have a problem. It spread.' You think, I may die. What are you going to miss?"

In early December, Dimon got the good news that he is cancer-free. His doctors won't declare him completely cured until three years have passed and there is no evidence of the disease. He has regained some of the weight he lost but still looks thinner than before. He occasionally gets tired and takes quick naps, but he has begun exercising again. "Not quite like I used to," he says. "I don't have my full appetite and taste back yet, but I feel good. It's nice to be healthy and back at work."

He is not yet sure how the bout with cancer has changed him. He believes the way he can still make the most difference for the world is at JPMorgan. "I really mean that," he says. He talks about jobs that can be created through providing capital to companies. He talks about how the firm has hired 8,000 military veterans and is investing in Detroit. He feels great about these things. "So that's what I can do," he says. "That's my contribution—running a sound, healthy company that serves millions of customers well and employs hundreds of thousands of people. What else am I going to do? I'm not an artist. I'm not a writer. I'm not a musician. I'd love to be a tennis player or musician. I'm not."

Maybe when he retires he will consider philanthropy. But, with his health much improved, he makes it clear that he has no plans to leave his company anytime soon. "I think our company has done well in very challenging times," he says. "I love my job and this company, so if it were up to me it would be about five years or so, but that's up to the company's board to decide." □

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Mellody Hobson



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 177 and in 2000 she helped with Bradley's presidential run. "Even when Mellody was really young, people would say, 'I see this woman everywhere,'" says Peter Thompson, whose aunt Maggie Daley also became close to Hobson. "She started cracking this scene early on."

The Bradley campaign also helped Hobson formulate her life's motto. She remembers a fund-raising trip to St. Louis with Louis Susman, the former U.S. ambassador to the U.K. "I said, 'Lou, what do you want?' He said, 'I want to have an interesting life and be surrounded by good people.' I said, 'That's it.' I added a third one, to leave the world a better place." She says, though, that this has caused her some cognitive dissonance. "A coach at Ariel said to me, 'Mellody, everyone doesn't want what you want.' This was shocking to me. It took me a long time to work through it. I thought, Not everyone wants to be around interesting people? No! Some people want to have two weeks' vacation and to go home at five P.M."

But it is Ariel that has been the anchor in her life. She likes to note that she's been told she is the only person from her class at Princeton who has had the same work number since graduation. Through stock grants, as well as purchases she's made, some by borrowing money when she was only in her 20s, Hobson has become a significant shareholder in Ariel—a stake that is worth tens of millions of dollars.

Which helps explain why the financial crisis of 2008 was such a difficult time for her. The firm had sailed through the dot-com crash, delivering above-average returns to investors, but in the 2008 financial crisis the stocks it owned were some of the hardest-hit—and Hobson had met an obstacle she couldn't outwork. Ariel's flagship fund fell almost 50 percent that year, and clients began pulling their money. The firm's assets under management peaked at $21 billion in 2004 and fell to just $3.3 billion in 2009. "Every single day, clients would call and fire us," Hobson says. "People who you'd known for years and years. It felt so personal." She and Rogers had to lay off 20 percent of the 100-person staff. "John was asking, 'Shouldn't the product be better?'" says Hobson. "I was saying, 'I haven't explained it well to clients. I didn't do a good job.' We both owned it."

Early one morning during the crisis, global markets were plunging. Hobson doesn't usually focus on day-to-day fluctuations, but this day she was staring at the TV, hyperventilating. She and Lucas always talk at 7:30 A.M. Chicago time when they're in different cities. "George said, 'What do you know better than anyone else because you live in Chicago?'" she recalls. "I said, 'George, I have no idea. I'm not interested in mind games.' He said, 'The one thing you have in Chicago is snowstorms. What do you know about snowstorms? In a snowstorm, when you're trying to get from one place to another place, you never look up at the storm. You watch your feet. If you look up at the storm you will fall.'" Hobson says, "I went to work, and thought, We must stay focused and watch our feet. We must just do the work."

Ariel got through the crisis, partly because Hobson and Rogers had left capital in the firm instead of paying it to themselves and partly because they didn't change their investing style. Although Morningstar analyst Kevin McDevitt points out that the crisis has dented Ariel's long-term record, since then the firm's main fund has dramatically outperformed the market. Assets under management have risen to $10 billion. "Post-crisis, being privately owned allowed them to stick to their knitting, and both owners and clients benefited in the end," says Bill Lee, the chief investment officer at Kaiser Permanente, who has given Ariel money to manage. He adds, "When you see the intensity of the work ethic from the owners, you know

they are still building their business, and don't have to worry about them calling in rich."

Ariel isn't yet where either Rogers or Hobson wants it to be. "We are still David," Rogers says. "We are proud of what we've done for 31 years, but we are the little guys. We want to be a major money-management firm." He continues, "There have been breakthroughs in other areas, but not in the financial world. When it comes to being taken seriously in the parts of the world where wealth and power are being created today, I do not think there are other Mellodys."

Hollywood Ending

Mellody Hobson was one of the lower-profile people at her own wedding. She and Lucas, who met in 2005, were married in the summer of 2013 at Lucas's Skywalker Ranch, which is just outside San Francisco. Bill Bradley walked Hobson down the aisle, and journalist Bill Moyers officiated. "I recognized almost everyone there!" says Thompson, and indeed, the guest list included Steven Spielberg, Oprah Winfrey, Samuel L. Jackson, and Harrison Ford, according to *People* magazine. Then the couple had a larger party at Chicago's Promontory Point, which offers the city's best view of Lake Michigan. That ceremony featured a performance by Prince.

"I've known George a long time and I've never seen him this happy, including the night that *Star Wars* opened," says David Geffen, who is another of Hobson's fans. ("I love her," he says.)

Hobson and Lucas's is not a relationship that is obvious to outsiders, and some of her friends were at first concerned. "We were sitting on the couch with our shoes off when she told me George had invited her to another dinner," recalls Arianna Huffington, who first met Hobson in the early 1990s on the board of Do Something, an organization that promotes social change. "I said, 'You can't go.' I thought he was a ladies' man." (Lucas and his first wife, film editor Marcia Lou Griffin, divorced in 1983.)

And yet, Huffington adds, there's a "kismet" to their relationship. At their wedding, Hobson made a comment that surprised her friend Joshua Cooper Ramo, the journalist turned vice-chairman of Kissinger Associates. She said that, as unlikely as it might seem, she and George were the same person. When Lucas was in his late teens, thinking he'd be a racecar driver, he had a terrible accident, resulting in a long hospital stay. He would go on to make *American Graffiti.* Ramo likens that to the one moment when Hobson met Bill Bradley. "They both had a moment when the panorama around them adjusted radically," he says. "And they both responded similarly."

"These are two hugely serious people," says Leigh Bienen, a criminal-defense lawyer who is a senior lecturer at Northwestern. She and Hobson first met when Mellody was a student and Bienen was teaching at Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School. "They are not kids. Probably, Mellody was never a kid in the sense of being carefree and careless, and perhaps George wasn't, either." She adds, "They are both people who for very good reasons do not have low opinions of themselves. They are not mock-humble. You never feel arrogance, you never see unkindness, but there is a glinty eye there. They are not fools, and they are not fooled by anyone. The other side of the coin is that they both recognize and respect other serious people."

When I ask Hobson what makes the relationship work, she says, "We have the same values. *Star Wars* was written for 12-year-old boys to teach them right and wrong." She adds, "By values, I mean what's right and what society expects of us."

She and Lucas, who has signed the Giving Pledge—created by Warren Buffett and Bill and Melinda Gates—committing himself to giving away half his fortune before or upon his death, have already given $25 million to the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools to support the construction of an arts building, and have announced that they will give another $25 million over five years to a Chicago nonprofit called After School Matters, which was founded by late Chicago First Lady Maggie Daley and where Hobson is chairman.

Hobson says that their shared values are also about normalcy. "George says to me, 'We are normal.' And we are. We go to movies every weekend. He likes to have the same experience that others do, so we don't watch in a screening room closed off to the world. We go to the local theater in whatever city we are in." She tells me about one Friday night when they ate at Sizzler.

Even so, Hobson's life is not exactly what one would call normal. At one pre-wedding party, she seated Howard Schultz with another longtime friend, Oprah Winfrey. "We got into a whole discussion about tea," Schultz recalls. "One thing led to another—and that was the beginning of the creation of Teavana Oprah Chai Tea," which Starbucks launched in April 2014.

On the surface, Hobson's circle of friends has the slightly artificial feeling of a consciously curated group of Very Important People. But, she says, "I have worked very hard to have my relationships be substantial." And that seems to be true. "She's not a networker. She's a magnet," says Dambisa Moyo. "She is a wisdom seeker and a mentor seeker," says Ann Davis Vaughan. "She is a sponge, always looking to soak up other people's words to live by, advice about how the world works, how to develop character, how to build an organization. It isn't just to get ahead. It's on a deeper level. She is always seeking this profound wisdom."

Hobson's connections have shaped her life. It is through Bill Bradley that she first met Howard Schultz, which resulted in her joining Starbucks' board in 2005. Schultz, who then served on the board of DreamWorks Animation, introduced her to Katzenberg. In 2004, Mellody joined that board. "She's the kind of person that if you called her at three in the morning and asked her to get something impossible done, she would have it done—at sunrise," says Schultz.

Hobson's friends also cite her humor, her ability to listen, her clear sense of right and wrong—and her candor. "Neither Mellody nor my wife attended the graduate school of diplomacy," says Dick Parsons. "She is appropriate and polite, but she leans toward the pole of candor and right-between-the-eyes rather than sugarcoating. People say about me that I can fire them and they leave thinking they got a raise. That's not a risk with Mellody."

Her candor can be jarring, and when it isn't accompanied by the warmth she shows those she has chosen to befriend, it can give her an icy quality. "I am very direct," she says. "It is not well received by all. I play better with people who can take it, those who are self-confident. But I know that limits my world, which is not good, so I'm trying to be more cognizant of that." She adds, "People can be crushed by my point of view now more than ever. You get this mystique, and your words have more consequences than you intended."

The flip side of her honesty is that she's not jaded. She recalls going to David Geffen's house for the first time for a DreamWorks Animation board meeting. "It is Moguls R Us," she says of her fellow board members. "I walk in and say, 'This is the nicest house I've ever been in.' Then I think, What am I saying? You all have really nice houses! But to pretend that it's not a big thing isn't right, even if saying it made me look like a country bumpkin. I am still in awe of the life I lead. I don't ever want anyone to think I take it for granted. I am amazed by it."

And that points to her most remarkable trait. She is part of many different worlds: the financial world, the social world, the political world, Hollywood. But she hasn't lost herself in any of them. "Even in that very high-powered group of amazing and intimidating people, Mellody is Mellody," says Thompson. "To be the same person no matter what, that is very rare."

This past spring, Hobson was invited to give a TED talk, the ultimate sign of inclusion and recognition among those who pride themselves on their smarts. She's long been passionate about financial literacy, and often says her lifetime goal is to make the stock market a regular topic of dinner-table conversation for every African-American family. And so, she wrote two separate TED talks. One was on financial literacy. The other was on race.

She began the talk on race by recounting a story about helping to organize an editorial-board lunch for Harold Ford Jr. when he was running for the U.S. Senate in Tennessee in 2006. "So Harold and I went to the party, and we arrived at the event in our best suits, looking like shiny new pennies," she said. They followed the receptionist, not paying much attention, "until suddenly we end up in a stark room and the receptionist

Mellody Hobson

turns to Harold and me and [thinking we were the waitstaff] asks, 'Where are your uniforms?'"

Hobson has always been outspoken about race. "In private settings, people do not talk about differences," says Sandberg. "She does and always did. She does it in such a way that people are able to hear it, and she does not mince words."

Even so, some of her friends thought a talk about race wasn't a wise idea.

But Hobson has always remembered her mother's question: How did they treat you? And then she read a story about a woman who would always tell her child, "Be brave." "I had one of those moments where I said, 'This is it,'" she says. She titled her speech "Color Blind or Color Brave?" and she said, "My challenge to you is simply this: Observe your environment. At work. At home. At school. And if you don't see any diversity, work to change it." "I am not a one-issue person," she says. "But it is important to me, and I feel incredibly, uniquely positioned to talk about it. 'If Mellody is saying it, maybe we need to think about it.'"

And if there's anyone who can blow stereotypes to bits and get people to listen, it is Mellody Hobson. □

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- **GEORGE LUCAS AND THE *STAR WARS* SAGA** (David Kamp, February 1999, and Jim Windolf, February 2005)

Thomas Gilbert Jr.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 161 didn't respond. "That was the odd thing. He didn't defend it at all. He just said, 'Peter's crazy—you don't understand.'" Another friend who spoke with both men that night says, "When I was talking to Tommy on the phone, the thing that made me think, This guy's not on this earth and possibly dangerous, was the flag thing"—Gilbert was "aggressively manic" in describing the incident, with "repetitive language, contradictions, raw anger, all in one diatribe." After being attacked in Williamsburg, Smith filed for and was granted the order of protection.

Even then, Gilbert seemed not to appreciate the gravity of what he'd done. "Afterwards," another source says, "Tommy was like, 'Hey, buddy, why can't we be friends? Hey, buddy, friends fight.' Peter was terrified." The rest of their social circle finally started taking what Smith had been telling them seriously. "For no reason," Bohannon says, "Tommy was creating this insane idea in his head that Peter was out to get him. Everyone knew this was out of nowhere. It just definitely seemed like some sort of mental event was going on that was scary."

"That was a real turning point in everybody's association with Tommy," echoes another friend. "I don't know a lot of people who hung out with him after that."

The Tommy Situation

If Thomas Gilbert Jr. had an enviable education, Thomas Gilbert Sr. was a person of exalted position. The second of two sons of Abner Gilbert, a textiles-machinery executive who'd been C.E.O. of Cutting Room Appliances Corporation, in New York, Tom Gilbert Sr. was an Andover-Princeton-Harvard man. At 70, he ran a hedge fund, lived on Manhattan's Beekman Place—where he and his wife, Shelley, had raised both Tommy and a younger daughter, Clare—owned a summer home in the gated Georgica Association, in Wainscott, and, besides belonging to the Maidstone, was a member of the exclusive River Club, on East 52nd Street.

In college, as in later life, Tom senior had been known for being exceptionally put-together in his dress, complementing his wide-wale corduroys with saddle shoes. At Princeton, he was a first-string center halfback in soccer and also a varsity squash player. Lanny Jones, who'd go on to become the managing editor of *People,* was on the soccer team and in the Colonial eating club with Gilbert and remembers him as "an elegant guy. He had a certain Gatsby-esque quality, and I don't mean that negatively at all. He was a gentleman, a throwback." Later in life, Gilbert took part in squash tournaments as far away as Kuala Lumpur and played the archaic racket sport known as court tennis. He wasn't too stuffy to quip, in notes to fellow Princeton alumni, that his wife's occupation was variously "Housewife, Consort," and "The Boss of Gilbert, Gilbert, Gilbert and Gilbert & Company." But it was also clear that he was someone for whom pedigree was of signal importance: even at 70, he still listed in his accomplishments an award from Andover for the highest academic achievements of any entering freshman.

Appearances were deceiving in his case, too, for he was evidently feeling money pressure. His career path had meandered, starting on Wall Street (eventually with the old-line investment bank Loeb Partners), but in recent years he had jumped from one entrepreneurial venture to the next and wound up at the unlikely destination, at his age, of starting his first hedge fund. The Gilberts still lived on the East Side but in less grand circumstances than just a few years earlier, having moved from the town house on East 61st Street to a one-bedroom apartment on Beekman Place that rented for $6,000 a month. The hedge fund, three years after launch, had only $7.3 million under management, a pittance in that world. The Georgica house was up for sale, and last year Gilbert Sr. took out a $4 million equity loan against it. (In an S.E.C. filing the year the hedge fund began, Gilbert reported having raised a total of just $575,000 from three investors, so it's possible the money was to be an infusion to boost the fund's nominal size.) When his estate recently went to probate, in Manhattan Surrogate's Court, its value was revealed as $1.6 million, a shockingly small amount for someone with his social affiliations who'd made a career on Wall Street. In the last year, he seemed stressed, and a Hamptons resident who had dealings with him goes as far as to say, "I think he was a failed person who didn't have the resources to maintain that lifestyle." (The Gilbert family did not respond to requests for interviews.)

If Gilbert's son knew of these pressures, they didn't seem to soften his feelings toward his father. Last year, according to one source, he told the tennis pro at the River Club not to match them in doubles. He was constantly griping about him, concerned that he was going to cut him off, though when he talked about him to Anna Rothschild—a publicist 19 years his senior whom Gilbert dated for several months last year—she says, it was "with hurt, not anger." He told her that his father was always disappointed with him. "Nothing he did was ever good enough."

It's unclear what steps, if any, Gilbert's parents were taking to deal with their son's escalating violence. Rothschild says he told her that he'd been on Xanax for his anxiety years earlier, and that he'd undergone a lot of psychotherapy since; other sources say Gilbert had been on some kind of psychiatric medication within the last year, and reportedly he saw a psychiatrist as recently as December. "Tommy is somebody who got a really textbook example of mental illness," says someone who has known him since childhood, and who spoke with him about the medications he was on. "He's a sweet, high-achieving guy who was taken down by chemicals in his brain."

Among his and Peter Smith's circle of friends, over the past year and a half, "the Tommy situation" was never far from their thoughts. In the year after Gilbert assaulted Smith in Williamsburg, the local S.P.C.A. showed up over

and over at the Sagaponack house where Smith was working, having received phone calls warning that a dog was being abused there. It was obvious to Smith and mutual friends that Gilbert had placed the calls. "That was completely preposterous," Bohannon says of the idea that Smith would treat the dog poorly. "I actually adopted it from foster care and gave it to Peter. He took amazing care of it." After yet another of the S.P.C.A. visits, says a different friend, "Peter confronted Tommy's dad and said, 'You've got to figure out your fucking son 'cause he's a crazy person.' It was always: 'Tommy's Tommy—what are you going to do? Hahaha.' But I think in private he really gave it to Tommy."

A childhood friend remembers a 13th-birthday party in Locust Valley with a small group that included Tommy Gilbert, where "Tommy brought the fireworks, and that was fine—we'd arranged it ahead of time. But the fireworks were the thing we got caught for. They were loud." The birthday boy's "parents were like, What the fuck? We said Tommy brought them. Tommy's parents refused to believe it. They said, 'No. We asked him—he said no. We don't think it happened.' So there was a tendency, when Tommy would do something extreme, for them to underplay it. I don't know if that was just their way of dealing publicly, and internally they were harsh about it."

By last spring, Gilbert's violence wasn't directed only at Smith. He went to sleep for several hours in the Maidstone men's locker room one day, and when a golf pro asked him to leave, other members say, Gilbert threatened to kill him and he was banned from the club indefinitely. Then last summer, on the evening of July 5, Bohannon's band, Mr. Badger, was playing at Stephen Talkhouse, a popular Amagansett bar with live music. Gilbert was there, and before the band went on, Bohannon spoke briefly with him. "He seemed on edge." Before the night was up, Gilbert had assaulted two of their mutual friends—Bosco Diaz and Timmy Briggs—attempting to choke one before being pulled off by bouncers and ejected from the bar, according to friends of all three men. He managed to re-enter and attack a second time, and was then thrown out for good. Once again, the issue had been Lizzy Fraser.

A Fire in the Hamptons

Gilbert had lived a more marginal existence in the past year: he was estranged from his old circle of friends, his ties to his own family frayed, his finances precarious, his employment nonexistent, even his housing in jeopardy. According to a friend, he was living in his parents' Georgica house without their permission. In March, Gilbert Sr. called the police after finding the thermostat turned up and a stain on a rug on the second floor. Rothschild recalls that the only time she saw Gilbert receive a phone call in the months that they dated was when his mother called to ask if he'd been at the Hamptons house, because the alarm had gone off.

By May, the relationship with Rothschild had run its course, and through a mutual friend he met a woman named Briana Swanson, a chef who'd appeared briefly on Gordon Ramsay's reality show *Hell's Kitchen.* Within weeks of meeting, she had moved into Gilbert's Chelsea apartment, where, according to a knowledgeable source, she soon saw firsthand the fraught mixture of family dysfunction and financial anxiety that consumed him. He told her he had permission from his parents to build a small cabin on their property in Georgica, and they camped a couple of nights in a tent on the beach nearby while he spent the days clearing brush from the site, but his parents were renting out the house, and he had to abort the project after the tenant arrived and asked him what he was doing. Gilbert and Swanson ended up leasing an apartment in Amagansett instead, but he was often a week late with his part of the rent.

Sometimes, their relationship was normal. He'd surf for hours while she read on the beach. He'd work up a huge appetite through his strenuous activity, and she'd cook for him. He could be affectionate, walking over to kiss her, putting his arm around her even as he drove his Jeep, giving her his ice-cream Snickers after she dropped hers. He could also be intensely private. She wasn't allowed anywhere near his computer, according to a source, nor near either of the small safes he kept in the Amagansett and Chelsea apartments. He talked about modeling or acting, and sometimes videotaped himself reading parts, but it was clear that these efforts weren't leading to any work.

Gilbert made no secret of the tensions with his family. On Father's Day, he didn't call his father, and he reportedly last spoke with his parents in August. He and Swanson never went to the Maidstone, a source says, though Gilbert didn't mention that he'd been banned. He told Swanson about the order of protection Smith had against him, which upset him because it meant he couldn't see a lot of his friends. He mentioned, one time when he'd grown especially quiet, that he was trying out a new medication. According to later reports, he fretted because his father had told him he was going to whittle down his weekly allowance to $400 or even $300.

After the Stephen Talkhouse incident, Gilbert's paranoia began to increase around Swanson too, a knowledgeable source says. She'd wake up to find him scrolling through her texts. He'd accuse her of being in cahoots with his old friends, of flirting with men he had introduced her to, of "messing" with him. But it was Peter Smith, once again, on whom Gilbert would destructively fixate. After Gilbert confronted Smith on the beach on Labor Day, and although his actions constituted a violation of the order of protection, Smith didn't go to the police. That would change two weeks later.

At 5:35 A.M. on September 15, a ground-floor window was broken at the Smith house at 850 Sagg Main Street, triggering an alarm. Ten minutes later, the house, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was an inferno. At 5:42 A.M., the Bridgehampton Fire Department responded, and it was soon joined by the Sag Harbor, Southampton, and East Hampton Fire Departments, as well as 75 volunteer firefighters. The house was too hot for them to enter, so the firemen fought the fire from outside, taking around three hours to extinguish it. By then the south side of the house had burned to the ground, and the north side, though still standing, was severely damaged. (The Smiths would eventually have the whole site bulldozed.)

A neighbor reported seeing a man in the cemetery across the street, watching the fire from among the tombstones, and investigators later found a gas can and gas-soaked rags there. The Smiths and those familiar with what they had been going through strongly suspected that Gilbert must have done it. Most concerning, at the day and time the house was set on fire, Peter would usually have been there sleeping. Smith now informed police of Gilbert's approach on the beach two weeks earlier, and on September 18, as Gilbert was driving on North Wainscott Road, East Hampton police stopped him and charged him with violating the order.

He was released, but he was now a person of interest in the fire investigation, particularly after the police spoke with Briana Swanson. A knowledgeable source says Swanson had arrived in the Hamptons on the 13th, and the next morning, before she'd even removed her bag from his car, Gilbert suggested they go to lunch. Once they were in the car, though, Gilbert drove her to the train station instead, telling her to go back to the city—he needed space; he needed to work. On the 18th, Swanson, unaware of the fire three days earlier, tried calling and texting Gilbert and was unable to reach him. When she saw him in the city a few days later, he explained that he'd been arrested for violating the order of protection. Gilbert didn't say anything about a fire.

A few days later, they broke up after Swanson arrived back at the Chelsea apartment and saw a flirty text exchange with another woman on Gilbert's tablet. She left the apartment with her clothes in garbage bags, texting a friend who told her about the fire for the first time. Later, according to several people with knowledge of the events, Swanson told investigators that the rags found in the cemetery across from the Smith house in Sagaponack appeared to match a set of purple bedsheets Gilbert had recently bought.

Handcuffs and Hollow-Points

On January 4, Tommy Gilbert went to his parents' apartment building at 20 Beekman Place, took the elevator to the eighth floor, and persuaded his mother to go out and buy him a sandwich. He wanted to speak with his father, who just an hour earlier had played doubles at the River Club. Shortly after, neighbors heard a gunshot, and his mother, returning to the apartment because of what she reportedly told police was "a bad feeling," found her husband in their bedroom, on his back between the bed and the wall near the windows, dead with a

Thomas Gilbert Jr.

single bullet hole in his head and his hand clasping a .40-caliber Glock pistol on his chest. Police believed this to have been an attempt to stage the scene as a suicide, and when they arrested Tommy Gilbert late that night, after breaking down the door of his Chelsea apartment, they found a disturbing collection of items, including hollow-point bullets, a red-dot laser gunsight, handcuffs, and a credit-card-skimming device along with 21 blank white credit cards.

Since then, Gilbert's onetime friends and school-mates, people who grew up to believe that if you went to certain schools and belonged to certain clubs and looked a certain way you could reliably be expected to conform to certain rules of behavior, have wondered what, if anything, could have been done to avert the terrible recent events. In the months before Thomas Gilbert Sr. died, a lot of people had become afraid of his son. It was openly known, among what one social acquaintance estimates as "150 to 400 people," that Gilbert was under suspicion for the fire at the Smith house in Sagaponack. Briana Swanson was so frightened that in October she fled town, going home to Iowa but telling Gilbert she was going south; according to a knowledgeable source, she actually detoured through South Carolina and posted pictures on Facebook of the cabin where she was staying, then unfriended him, so that as far as he knew she was still in South Carolina. "We knew that unless he got help something bad was going to happen," Bohannon says. "I had no question someone was going to get killed," says another friend.

On February 5, Gilbert, who had been held at the Rikers Island jail since his arrest on a charge of second-degree murder, was escorted into a Lower Manhattan courtroom for his arraignment with his hands cuffed behind his back. Asked by Judge Melissa Jackson what plea he wished to enter, Gilbert paused briefly before saying, in an assertive voice: "Not guilty." His hair and beard had been roughly trimmed since his last hearing, and he was wearing an orange Department of Corrections jumpsuit; as news photographers with telephoto lenses took his picture, his attorney, from the high-profile defense firm of Brafman & Associates, asked the court to disallow cameras on the grounds both that Gilbert's inelegant appearance was "prejudicial" and that this was a circumstantial case with no eyewitnesses, so propagation of his image could muddy the waters should a witness later come forward. "Counsel, please," the judge said with an almost audible eye roll, noting widespread news coverage of the case as she denied the application.

The Smith family have told friends that they hope to rebuild their Sagaponack home exactly as it was. □

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Robin Wright



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 143 [youth-oriented] movies that were going around, like *Less than Zero* and *Sixteen Candles.*" Robin gave up and got a job working in the kitchen of a tour boat, despite a tendency to get seasick; 24 hours before she was set to sail she got the part as Kelly Capwell, on *Santa Barbara.* She signed a two-year contract and, without any acting training, managed to be nominated for three Daytime Emmys.

When Rob Reiner, who saw her on *Santa Barbara,* cast her as Buttercup in *The Princess Bride* (opposite Cary Elwes), in 1987, she found herself in a big movie with a wonderful cast of well-established actors—Billy Crystal, Mandy Patinkin, Carol Kane, Wallace Shawn, and Chris Sarandon. Seven years later she co-starred in *Forrest Gump,* as Gump's troubled best friend/love interest, who ends up a victim of the excesses of the 60s.

Tom Hanks first met Wright when the cast did camera tests for *Forrest Gump.* "She had, even then, a mysterious presence that is based on no small amount of physical grace and beauty," he recalled. She also possessed a "degree of concentration that's almost intimidating."

During one scene in *Forrest Gump,* in which Hanks's awkward, mentally challenged character dances, he made Wright laugh so hard that "I peed my pants and didn't have a change of costume!" she recalled with a laugh. A member of the crew dried her clothes with a hair dryer. Hanks remembered that night, too, but a little differently. "We're out on this beautiful location. The light was kind of magical. And Forrest's innate lack of rhythm and yet his unfettered joy at dancing with the love of his life—yeah, that was a pretty great night."

Josh Brolin co-stars with Wright in her next film, *Everest,* based on Jon Krakauer's 1997 best-seller *Into Thin Air* and due to be released later this year. Like Hanks and Michael Kelly, who also appears in *Everest,* he'd been deeply impressed when he first saw her in *The Princess Bride.* Brolin told *Vanity Fair* that "there was nothing phony in what she did: total conviction is what she had, and it was, and still is, extremely powerful. She lends herself to her characters completely, no matter how intense, funny, silly, or tragic. Even in *Forrest Gump*—who wouldn't run if Jenny told you to?"

Wright met Sean Penn on the set of *State of Grace* and they fell in love, marrying in 1996. This was a second marriage for both—Wright had been briefly married to the late actor Dane Witherspoon, in 1986, who acted with her in *Santa Barbara.* Penn, famously and also briefly, was married to Madonna, in 1985. (They made one movie together, *Shanghai Surprise,* in 1986, "a venture so grisly that it added to one's reverence for the deranged power of love," in the words of film critic David Thomson.) Indeed, marriage to Wright was a kind of redemption for Penn, and she really was a princess bride, married to one of America's great leading men, who's been compared to James Dean and Marlon Brando. "I was pregnant and ostensibly married at 24," Robin says. She called herself Robin Wright Penn and raised their two kids, Dylan and Hopper Jack, now 23 and 21 years old, respectively. "I did it [changed my name] really for my children because we'd had kids before we married, and I thought that we should all have the same name. That's traditional."

Their marriage lasted 14 years, but there was *tristesse.* Some felt that Wright suffered in the shadow of Sean Penn's fame. Was this another Ali MacGraw–Steve McQueen marriage, in which McQueen's moodiness and greater fame had a chilling effect on MacGraw's career? When asked if she felt that way, Wright answered that she didn't warm to the idea of talking about her marriage to Penn. "I'm not in the business of talking about what 'isn't,'" she wrote in an e-mail. "My eyes are set forward and I've never been happier. I have too much respect for Sean and our two extraordinary children to sell our past joys and woes for public consumption and fodder."

But after several weeks in Paris, she phoned to say she was ready to talk about

the marriage and what she has learned sifting through the ashes. "I grew up very fast as a young girl, but I grew slowly into my womanhood. We were learning as we were going along. We agreed as parents that we'd not work at the same time, so that one of us was always with the kids. He was making more money than I was at the time, so it was a simple decision: 'You go work—I'll stay with the kids.' And we got along great as creative people. Acting together, him directing me [in *The Crossing Guard* in 1995]—that was great."

To avoid the "bubble of celebrity," Wright says, "we got out of L.A. and raised our kids in Northern Cal." But the move ultimately failed to preserve their marriage, and in 2010, after repeated breakups and reconciliations, they divorced. "I believe we were together not only to have our beautiful children but to learn how to love . . . for the next time around, the right way. And then, what I'm looking for in people now," she adds, "is kindness."

(*V.F.* reached out to Penn for anything he would like to say about their life together, but his publicist, Mara Buxbaum, responded in an e-mail: "Sean is traveling and not available to participate.")

In 2013 she appeared alongside Naomi Watts in the unsettling Australian movie *Adore,* about two best friends who have sex with each other's sons (a role that still disturbs her). But it was her supporting role as Erika Berger in David Fincher's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo,* based on the best-selling thriller by Stieg Larsson, that changed the game for her.

When Fincher took her out for coffee and told her about *House of Cards,* Wright asked why she should consider doing television. Fincher told her, " 'It's a great story. It's a great character, and I don't think it's television. I think it's something slightly four feet to the left of television.' So I asked if she would bless us with her presence. I basically begged."

As for the chemistry between the series's two lead actors, Tom Hanks thinks that Wright is "without a doubt the absolute equal to Kevin Spacey. Perhaps she even tops his character, because you get a sense of how afraid he is of her, and rightly so. In a lot of ways, she's like the female version of Bryan Cranston as Walter White in *Breaking Bad*—someone loaded with secrets and so very self-aware. It's a perfect match of story, character, and actor."

Directors and Directing

James Foley, who directed nine episodes of *House of Cards* in the first two seasons, says, "I'll tell you the God's honest truth: in shooting Season One, everybody shared the same healthy skepticism, and we were very aware that this could be totally under the radar. We even joked in the beginning, you know: 'Streaming soon to a device near you.' I remember being stunned when David told me he was even doing it."

Michael Kelly, who plays Underwood's henchman, recovering alcoholic Doug Stamper, was also skeptical about the new, streaming format of the series. "We knew [early on] that we had something special, but the only thing we didn't know was Netflix. Nobody might ever see the show. But it's just so great—look at how many people have followed it." (Though Netflix doesn't release its numbers, the show's popularity has skyrocketed since its first season, increasing its viewership eightfold.)

The Congo

It's ironic, perhaps, that playing a conniving congressional wife who accepts questionable funding for her Clean Water Initiative has given Wright the profile and the clout to draw attention to her soon-to-be-launched Robin Wright Foundation. It actually comprises multiple charities, including the Enough Project's Raise Hope for Congo campaign. Wright first traveled to Eastern Congo five years ago, with two members of activist John Prendergast's Enough Project, which investigates crimes against humanity in conflict areas. (Prendergast was director of African Affairs at the National Security Council during the Clinton administration, has worked with George Clooney in Sudan, and co-authored two books with the actor Don Cheadle, including the *New York Times* best-seller *Not on Our Watch.*)

"He enlightened me about the correlation between our electronics that we use every single day and minerals coming from the Congo," Wright explained. "A woman is raped every 48 minutes in the Congo because the militias are coming in and dismantling families around the regions of the mines. We're exacerbating the problem by buying. So, it's basically cleaning up the trade, exactly the same template as blood diamonds."

Last year, Wright launched Pour les Femmes, a "give-back company" that sells a line of sleepwear created by designer Karen Fowler and donates a portion of the proceeds to assisting women in Africa who are victims of violence. "I just became impassioned with helping these women," she said. "You're looking in their eyes, and you know they've been broken. Some of them will never be able to stand up again because they've been so brutally raped. It's unspeakable."

Outside, the snow showed no signs of letting up. Wright was due to fly with her daughter, Dylan, to Paris, a city she's loved since her early modeling days. (Dylan is modeling for Gap, and she and her brother, Hopper Jack, "are getting their feet wet in the biz," acting in films coming out next year.) "They know how to do life," she says of Paris, where she would be seeing her companion, the 34-year-old actor Ben Foster (*Lone Survivor*), whom she had met on the set of *Rampart* in 2011. They had announced wedding plans last year, broke them off, and now are back together. They even sport tattoos on their ring fingers: "B" on Wright's and "R" on Foster's. She said about the relationship, "I've never been happier in my life than I am today. Perhaps it's not ladylike [to say], but I've never laughed more, read more, or come more than with Ben. He inspires me to be the best of myself. There's so much to learn. It's endless. How great! It took me a long time to grow up. Love is possible as life is possible."

Robin finished her tea and bundled up to face the elements, as she always has. □

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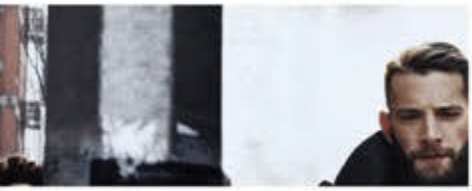
At age 20, he was the youngest actor ever to win a best-supporting-actor Oscar, for his role in *Ordinary People*. Thirty-four years later, the star of John Ridley's ABC drama series, *American Crime*, admits his lifelong yearning to build a boat



What is your idea of perfect happiness? Making trails and building a tree house. **What is your greatest fear?** Lack of purpose. **Which historical figure do you most identify with?** Arthur B. Poole. **Which living person do you most admire?** Chuck Feeney (the James Bond of philanthropy). **What is the trait you most deplore in others?** An arbitrary contrarian. **What is your greatest extravagance?** Wine and reclaimed wood. **What is your favorite journey?** Solo motorcycle trip through Italy. **What do you consider the most overrated virtue?** All vetted, adequately rated. **On what occasion do you lie?** February 29. **What do you dislike most about your appearance?** A glum face in repose. **Which living person do you most despise?** Climate-change deniers. **What is your greatest regret?** Thinking I could build a boat. **Which talent would you most like to have?** Build a boat. **What or who is the greatest love of your life?** My sons. **When and where were you happiest?** Playing catch with my son Noah at Fenway Park. **What is your current state of mind?** Texas. **If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?** To have a better appreciation for a life well lived. **If you could change one thing about your family, what would it be?** Proximity. **What do you consider your greatest achievement?** To be determined. **If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?** A tree house. **If you could choose what to come back as, what would it be?** A hybrid of George Plimpton and Hunter S. Thompson. **What is your most treasured possession?** Letter from Ted Williams to my father. **What do you regard as the lowest depth of misery?** Bill Buckner's error coinciding with my wedding night. **Where would you like to live?** Paris, with language fluency. **What is your favorite occupation?** Architect. **What is your most marked characteristic?** Appetite. **What is the quality you most like in a man?** Alpha suppression. **What is the quality you most like in a woman?** Clarity. **What do you most value in your friends?** Perspective. **Who are your favorite writers?** Raymond Carver, Dave Eggers, Philip Roth, Alice Munro, Thomas Pynchon, Eudora Welty, Peter Matthiessen, Vladimir Nabokov, Evelyn Waugh, Roald Dahl, David Sedaris, Jennifer Egan, and George Saunders. **Who is your favorite hero of fiction?** Max, from *Where the Wild Things Are*. **Who are your heroes in real life?** Good teachers. **What are your favorite names?** Milo and Noah. **What is it that you most dislike?** Traffic lights and cold soup. **How would you like to die?** Full.

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IT IS BETTER TO FAIL IN ORIGINALITY THAN
TO SUCCEED IN IMITATION — *HERMAN MELVILLE*









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